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"THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF
CRAFTSMANSHIP"

History with a Match

Being an Account of the Earliest
Navigators and the Discovery of

America

Written and
Drawn and Done into Color
by

HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON

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"The Fall of the Dutch Republic," "The Rise of the Dutch Kingdom,"

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DAVID McKAY, PUBLISHER

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Foreword

TO ALL GROWN-UPS:

This little book is an historical appetizer. It does not intend to give children all the facts about all the events of all the earliest discoveries of Greenland and Iceland and America. It merely says, "Dear Children: History is the most fascinating and entertaining and instructive of arts. It tells us of men of great courage and people who knew how to die for their convictions. It shows us how very difficult it is to achieve anything in this world and how we have to work for everything we want to accomplish. And it teaches us that our own little worries are mere trifles compared to the discouragement which other men and women have suffered and have overcome without assistance from the outside."

Once the child understands that history does not consist of the heterogeneous dates and the stereotyped patriotic deeds of the average textbook he may take to reading history for the fun of it. He may acquire a taste for a pastime as valuable as playing the piano or studying poetry. There is nothing practical about history, and the new school of pedagogues who expect to distil culture out of plumbing and boilermaking may succeed in excluding history from the school curriculum. A great many historians help this process along by turning history into a sacred substance administered to the masses in large but indigestible doses. They are like cooks who recite chapters from a cook book rather than boil us a palatable pudding. The pudding, of course, has to be based upon certain definite principles of the culinary science. But when it is brought upon the table as a very evident combination of a little flour, some butter, eggs, raisins and cinnamon, we politely swallow a few spoonfuls, say "No, thank you!" to the offer of a second help, and hasten to a better restaurant.

I do not want to get my metaphors mixed; therefore I shall ask somebody to let me have a match and begin with my story.

Cornell University
16 January, 1917

HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON

A SHORT HISTORY
OF
DISCOVERY
FROM
THE EARLIEST TIMES
TO
THE FOUNDING OF COLONIES



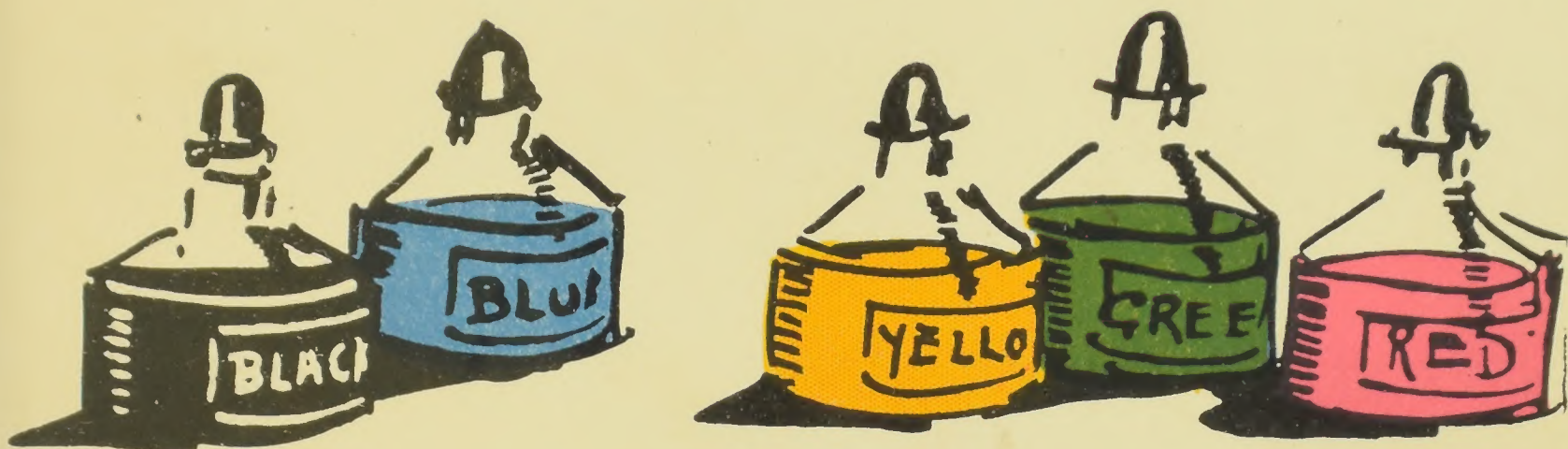
ON
THE AMERICAN CONTINENT

DRAWN WITH

A



AND



BY

HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON.

PUBLISHED

BY

DAVID MCKAY

OF

PHILADELPHIA.

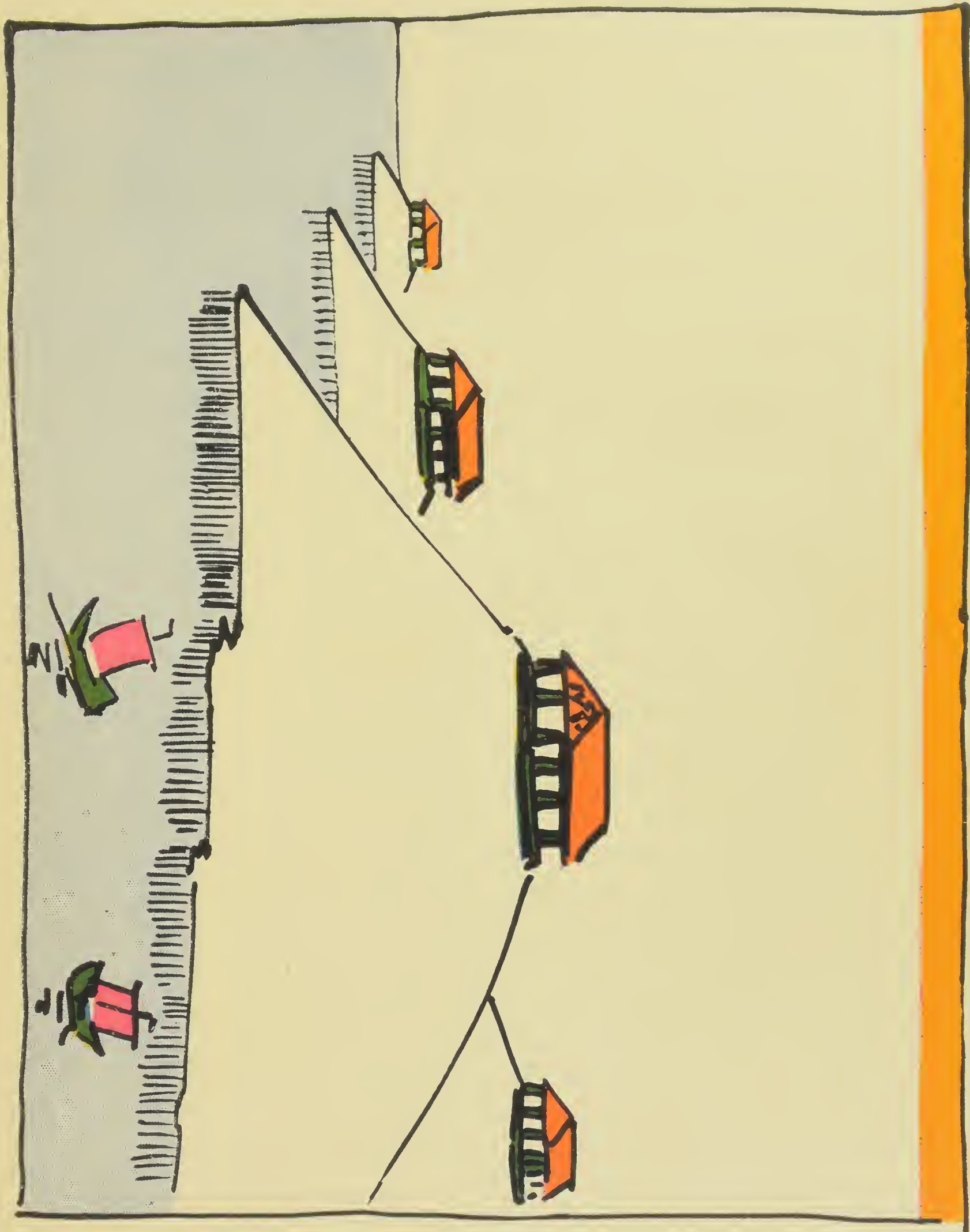
AND
DEDICATED

To



*Once upon a time there was a people called
the Greeks. They lived in a beautiful
land of sunshine and temples*

ONCE UPON a time, many, many years ago, there lived a people called the Greeks. They inhabited a small and very rocky peninsula and a number of islands. A peninsula is a piece of land surrounded on all sides but one by water. It has a very long coastline and therefore it offers a beautiful chance for navigation. The Greeks soon learned how to manage small boats. With these they sailed all over the eastern part of the Mediterranean and built cities and villages on the many small and rocky islands of the Aegean Sea. They were out in the open most of the time and they learned at a very early age how to handle arms and protect themselves against foreign enemies. Time and again the mighty Empire of the Persians tried to conquer this little corner of the world, but all attacks ended in defeat. From all parts of Greece, on land and by means of their quick-sailing vessels, the Greeks would rush to the threatened spot and would stop the invader, often at the sacrifice of every single man who had gone forth to defend the common Fatherland.



They were great philosophers and mathematicians

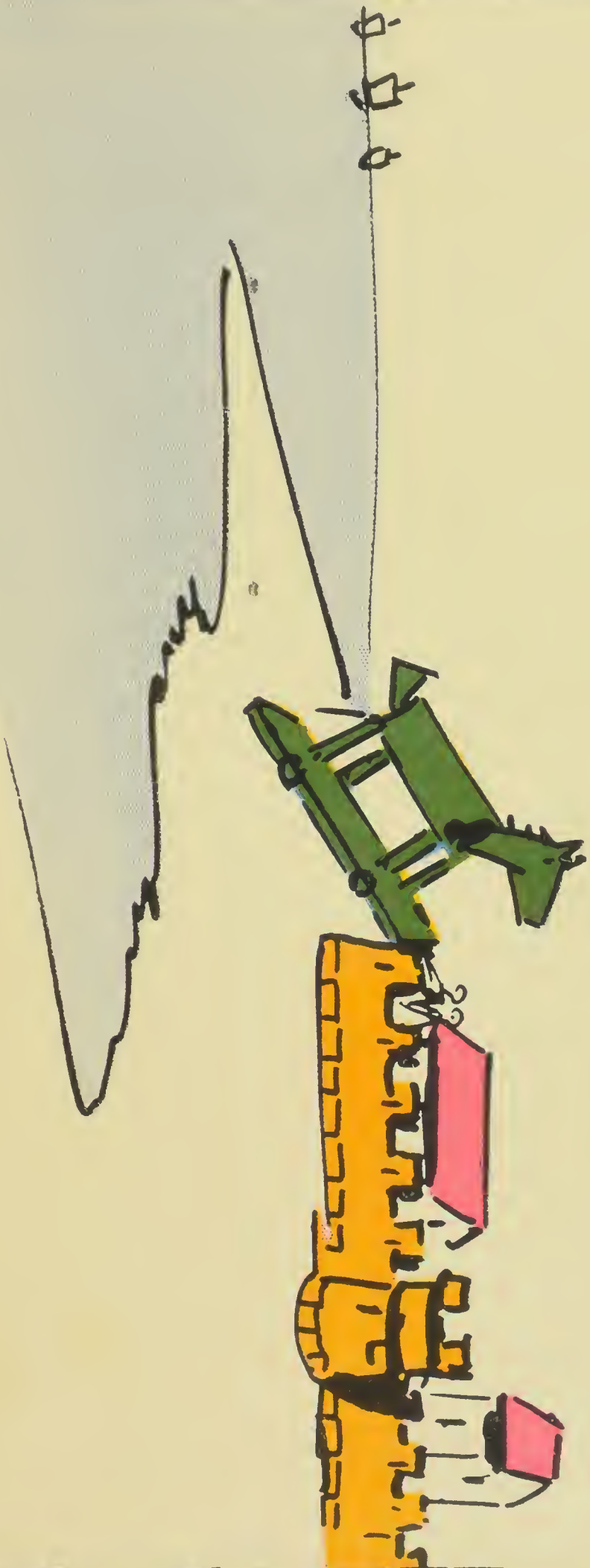
WHEN THERE was no war the Greeks used to spend their time in commerce and soon they were quite well-to-do. Many people could then afford to buy slaves and let these work for them. We don't buy slaves nowadays but we buy shares in large factories and they work for us (if we have any) just as the little slaves worked for their Greek masters. When all is said and done, however, the Greeks of two thousand years ago knew better than we do how to use their leisure hours and days. They did not believe in too much pleasure. According to the Greeks pleasure should be like sunshine. We appreciate the light of the sun part of the time but we are also grateful for a little shade. Otherwise life would be too monotonous.

The Greeks insisted that every man should spend some effort upon the development of his brain. By dint of practice they learned to perform a very difficult task—they learned how to reason in a logical fashion. Such reasoning is really at the basis of our table of multiplications and all other mathematical problems. The Greeks were great mathematicians, and by applying the rule of three to all problems of life they became very wonderful philosophers. Even today, after almost twenty centuries, we have to go back to the original Greek books to learn how to think. And some of us never learn it at all.



*They navigated the sea, until they reached
the famous city of Troy*

ALL BEGINNINGS are difficult. Take this question of navigation. It is very easy for us, with strong steel ships and powerful engines and correct compasses, to find our way across the turbulent Ocean. But the Greeks, whose ships were much smaller than our modern ferryboats and who had no compass and must steer by the information given by the stars—these Greeks thought that they had performed a great and glorious feat when they managed to cross the Aegean Sea and attack the town of Troy. The Trojan war in itself is not so very important. The son of the King of Troy had run away with the wife of the Greek King Menelaus. We might never have heard of this affair (which would have been just as well) if it had not been for a certain poet by the name of Homer who wrote such a fine story about it that we read it today for the sheer pleasure of its delicate literary expression. Homer tells us how the Greeks laid siege to Troy for years and years and years. But the walls of Troy were high and the Trojans sat happily at home while the poor Greeks raged in anger and froze in the cold breezes of the inhospitable shore. Finally the clever Greeks hit upon an idea. They built a large wooden horse and filled it with soldiers, just as we fill large boxes that look like pumpkins with candy. Then the Greeks sailed away. The curious Trojans saw the horse, hoisted it into their city and thought that it was a fine joke. But when the Greek soldiers crept out of the horse at night it was no longer a joke at all.

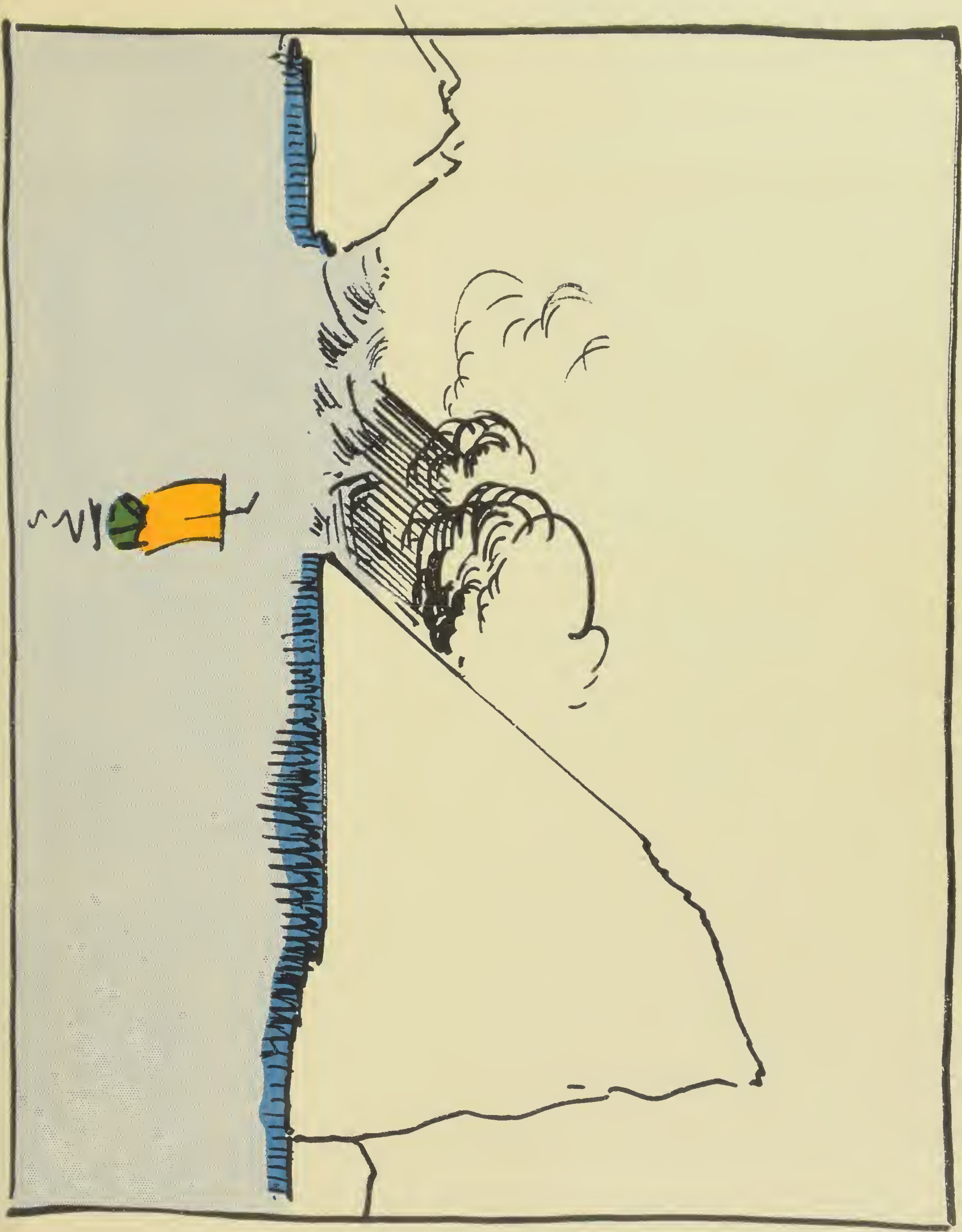


Afterwards the Greeks sailed across the Mediterranean

THIS WAS by no means the only adventure of the Greek warriors. Perhaps, if you ask your Papa for more books of this sort, I shall write one about old Hellas.

This time I must talk only about the old and new navigators. Very slowly and very carefully the Greeks explored every nook and corner of the Mediterranean, the Sea of Marmora and the distant Black Sea. At last, after several centuries of adventurous voyages, they reached the straits which we now call the Straits of Gibraltar.

You ask a question. "Did they ever pass through the straits and get into the Atlantic?" and I answer "No!" but I could not precisely tell you why not. The Phoenicians many years before had ventured into the Atlantic to sail to Wales and buy tin, necessary for their bronze weapons. The Greeks, less eager for tin, were afraid of this vast stretch of water where it was always stormy and always cold and always foggy. Their skippers used to tell each other terrible yarns about great monsters which swallowed whole ships and more nonsense of a similar nature. Finally they believed their own stories and kept well within the bounds of the Mediterranean. If ever you happen to cross this sea on a stormy day you will notice that it is quite big enough to provide comfortable sailing space for a few hundred thousand Greeks.

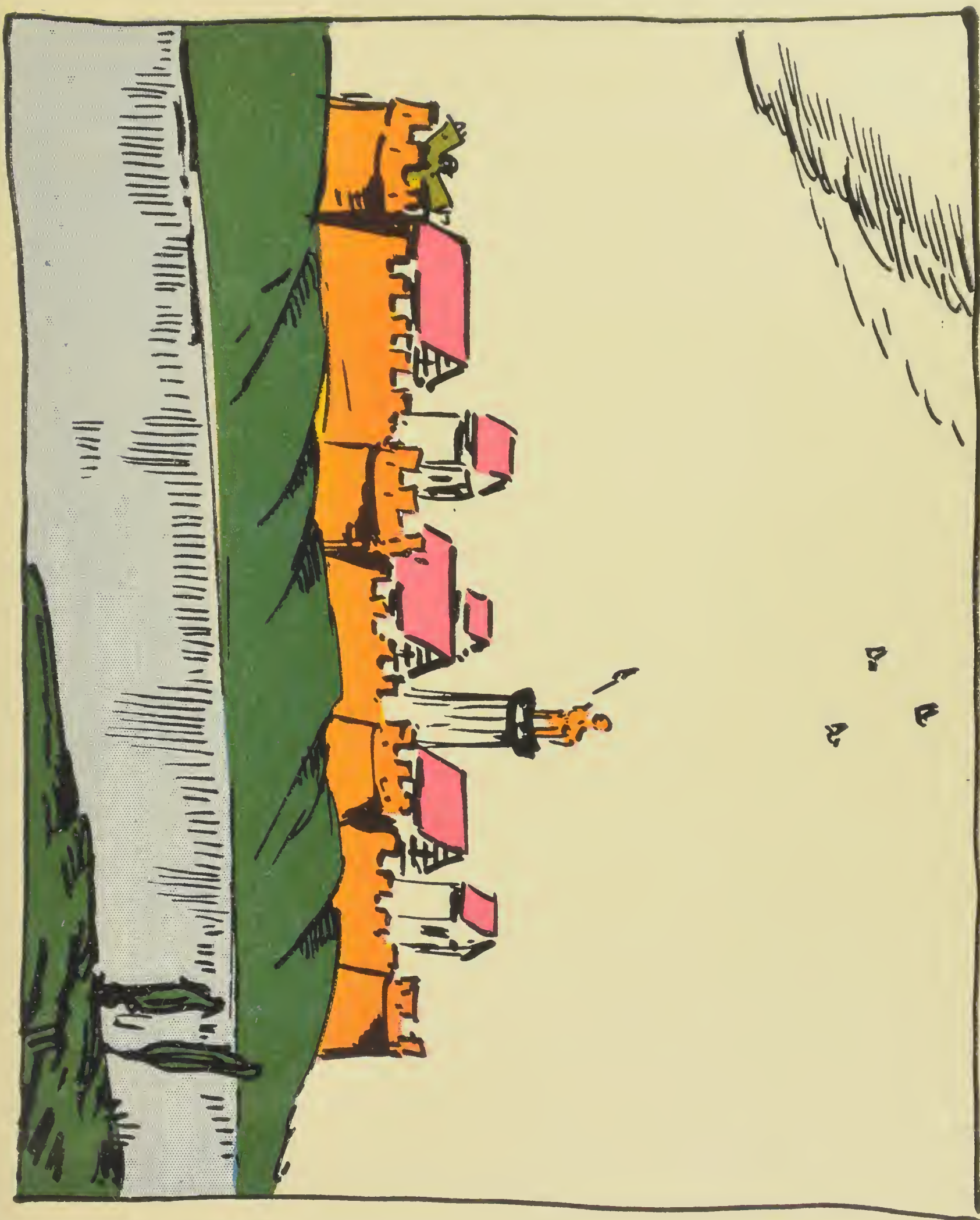


*A little to the West of the Greeks there lived
another people, called the Romans*

THE GREEKS, however, were not the only people who lived and died and wrote poetry and fought battles in the Mediterranean. They had rivals. We call these rivals the Romans. You must have seen many Romans in your day. They no longer conquer the world, as their ancestors did, but they do very useful work on railroad tracks and with pushcarts filled with bananas and peanuts. More than two thousand years ago (for such is the way of the world and we all have our ups and downs) the Romans were the masters of all that part of Europe, Asia and Africa which went by the name of "the civilized world." Originally they were a small tribe of shepherds who lived in a little city built upon seven low hills, on the banks of a muddy little stream called the Tiber.

The Romans, once they had formed a state and had begun to gobble up the territory of their neighbors, showed very different characteristics from the Greeks. They did not care much for fine literature and noble architecture and melodious music. They hired Greeks to build temples and poetize and play the flute for them, just as we import foreign opera singers and piano virtuosí and acrobats and school teachers to train our young while we are busy constructing bridges and powder houses and subaquatic tunnels and skyscrapers.

No, the great virtue of the Roman was his aptitude for legal reasoning and managing the affairs of his neighbors much better than the neighbors ever could hope to do themselves.



*They were great soldiers and built roads and
bridges all over Europe*

THEIR soldiers and their civil administrators marched east and west and south and north and founded an empire which, under one name or another, survived until the days of your own great-grandfather, and long after President Washington died.

Wherever you go in Europe today you will find roads built by the Romans and bridges across wide Alpine chasms built by the Romans and cities along the banks of mighty rivers built by the Romans (I mean the cities, for the Romans, although they dug many canals, never attempted to dig a river). Across these bridges and along these roads and past those cities marched the legions of the mighty town which was the Mistress of all the World and sent her viceroys to rule her possessions from the distant hills of Palestine to the wooded plains of North Germany.

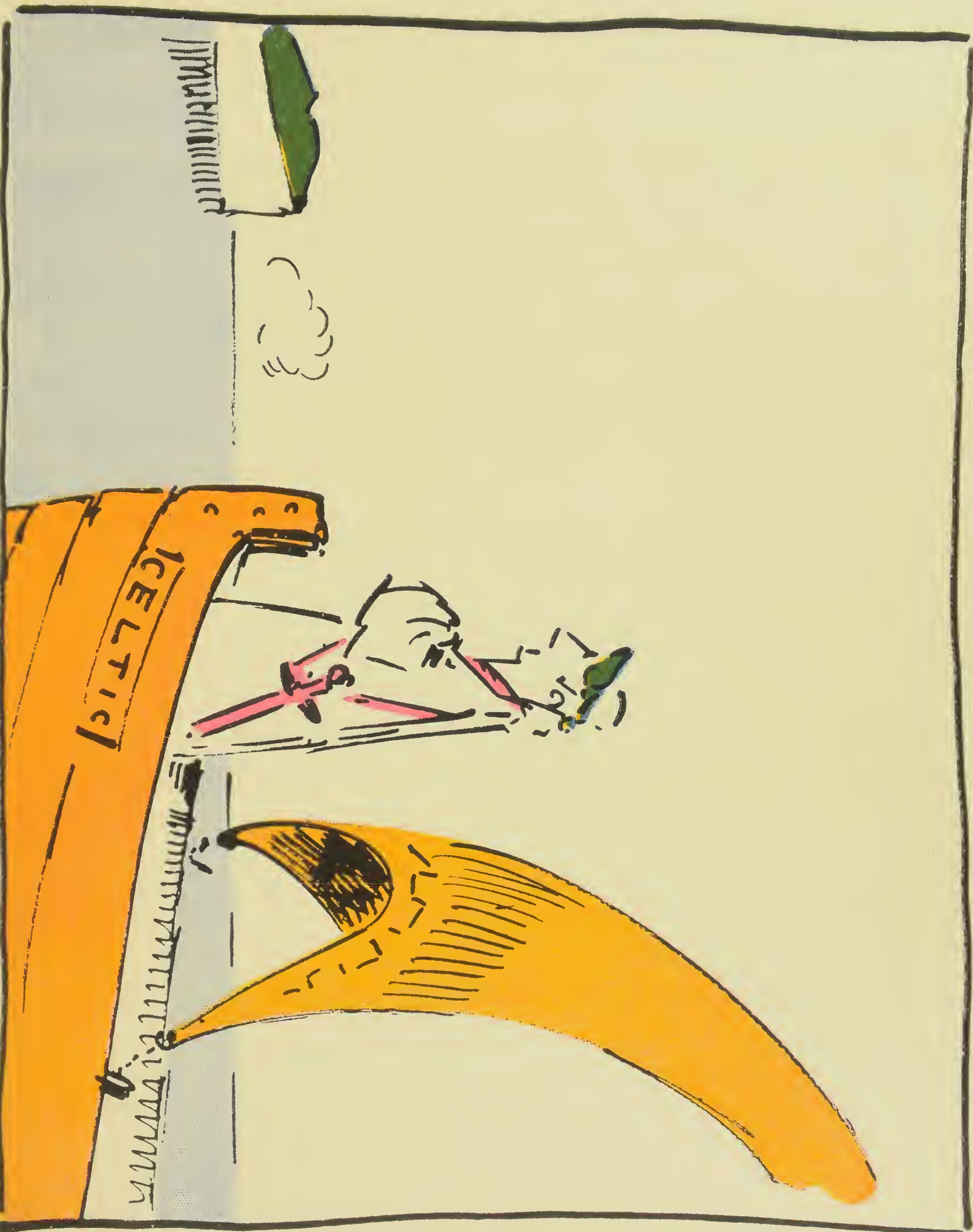
Within this wide domain there was peace and there was quiet. There were no brigands and no robbers; for the Romans did not only know how to make laws, they also understood the rare art of making people obey them.



*One of their generals even crossed the Channel
and discovered England*

FINALLY, having reached the ultimate borders of the European continent, the Romans decided that they would explore the shores of the pretty green island which they could see from the walls of their castles in France. Hence, one of their generals, famous for his ability to lead expeditionary armies through the wild regions inhabited by savage Teutons, built a fleet and landed in England. The name of this General was Caius Julius Cæsar. He crossed the British Channel in the year 50 B.C.

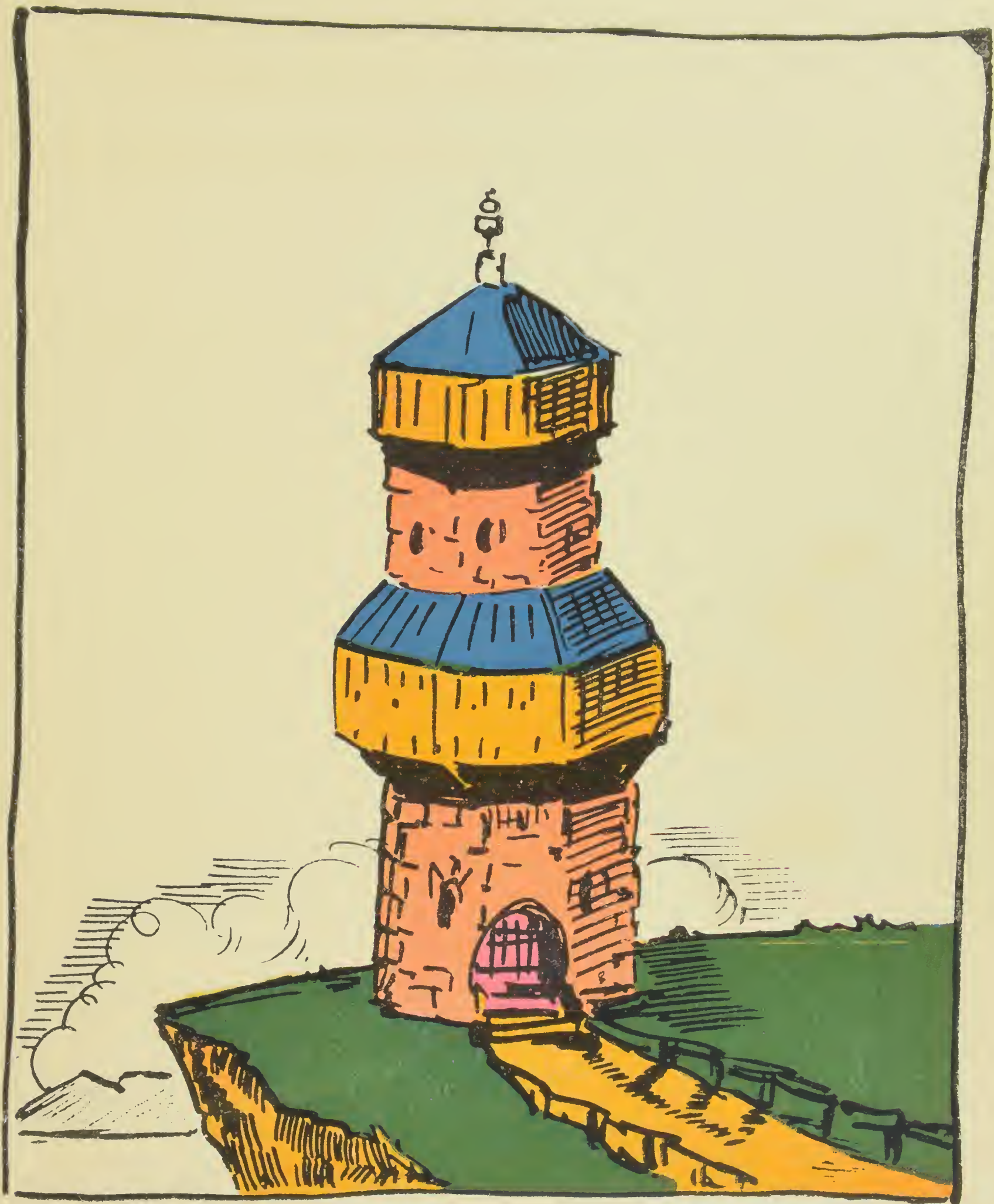
He marched through Kent, discovered the river Thames, and pushed as far as Essex. Then he went back to Europe and eventually to Rome. He came to a very sad end. Like many popular men before him, he was very ambitious, and he wanted to become Emperor of all the vast Roman domains. But those who cared more for civic righteousness than for outward glory decided to prevent this plan and they killed Cæsar with the thrust of many daggers. His name survives. Whenever somebody rules a great many lands we say that he is "a Kaiser." The Romans pronounced the C as a K, and when we talk about the Kaiser of Germany or Russia or China we really mean somebody who is like the old Roman Cæsar.



The Romans constructed many strong towers and many well-fortified cities

AS FOR the Roman methods of civil and military administration, they were simplicity itself. When the Roman armies entered a new country they looked for a convenient hill and on top of this they built a fine tower, strong and impregnable. The poor Franks and Gauls and Britons and Teutons who lived around this tower could not hope to destroy it with their weak arrows and slingshots. So they made the best of a fairly comfortable bargain. They paid the Romans a certain amount of tribute every year in the form of cowhides (for soldiers' shoes) and honey (which the people used before the invention of sugar) and things which the armies could eat and drink. In return for their board and lodging the Roman general administered the conquered territory in an exemplary fashion.

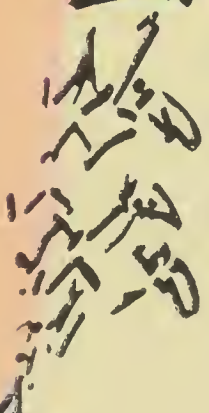
Of course, among so many viceroys there were a few bad men who made use of their strong position among a weak people to fill their own pockets. But the main average of Roman governors was quite good. They were Mayor and Board of Aldermen and Chief of Police and Bureau of Registration and Commissioner of Weights and Measures, all in one. They worked hard to give all the people a reasonable chance to live a quiet and decent life, and in this they succeeded very well for many centuries.



*But a new and more energetic people, called
the Teutons, destroyed the Roman State*

UNFORTUNATELY (or fortunately, I do not know which), nothing in this world, not even Roman Empires, can endure forever. The Romans were strong and capable rulers as long as they were obliged to work for the success which they desired to obtain. But the day came when they were too prosperous and too rich to care much about office-hours in the morning and a good night's sleep. Then they began to neglect the important affairs of every-day life and concentrated their attention upon the pursuit of pleasure. Instead of being up betimes to drill their soldiers or keep the accounts of their province, they danced until all hours of the morning and slept until after luncheon. This of course will never do. Empires and Republics can not survive the indulgent laziness of their most privileged classes. For the world seems to be based upon a system in which competition plays a chief rôle. The moment one man stops working his neighbor, who now shines his boots, begins to work a little harder. Very soon the man of leisure will polish the shoes and the former bootblack will drive about in a fine motor car. So it goes with human beings and so it goes with mighty Empires.

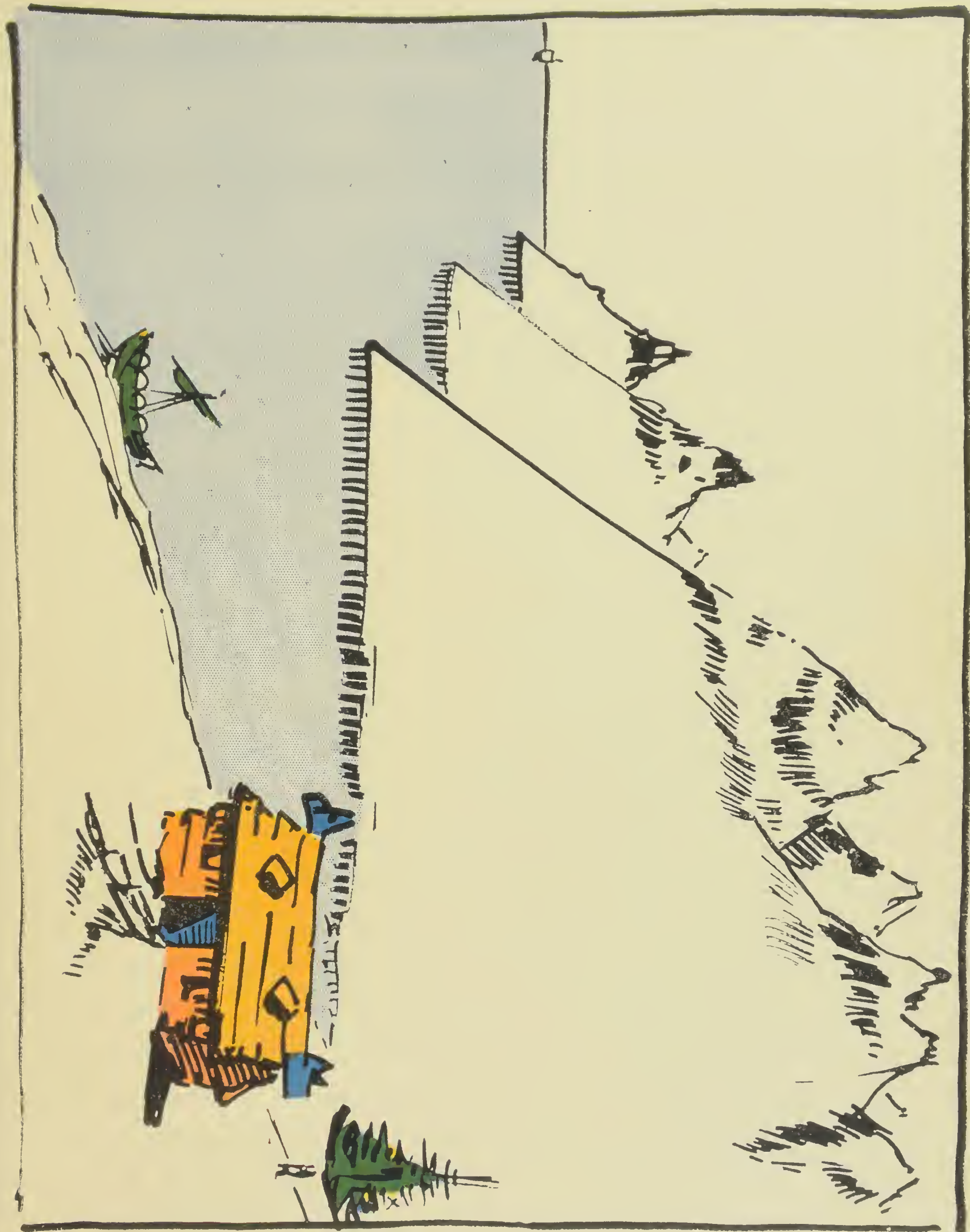
And when the virile Teutonic tribes attacked the Roman Empire in the third and fourth century of our era even the high walls of the well-fortified cities could not prevent the final ruin of Rome. For a country does not depend for its defence upon material things but upon the courage and the spirit of its citizens.



In the Northern part of Europe there lived the Norsemen

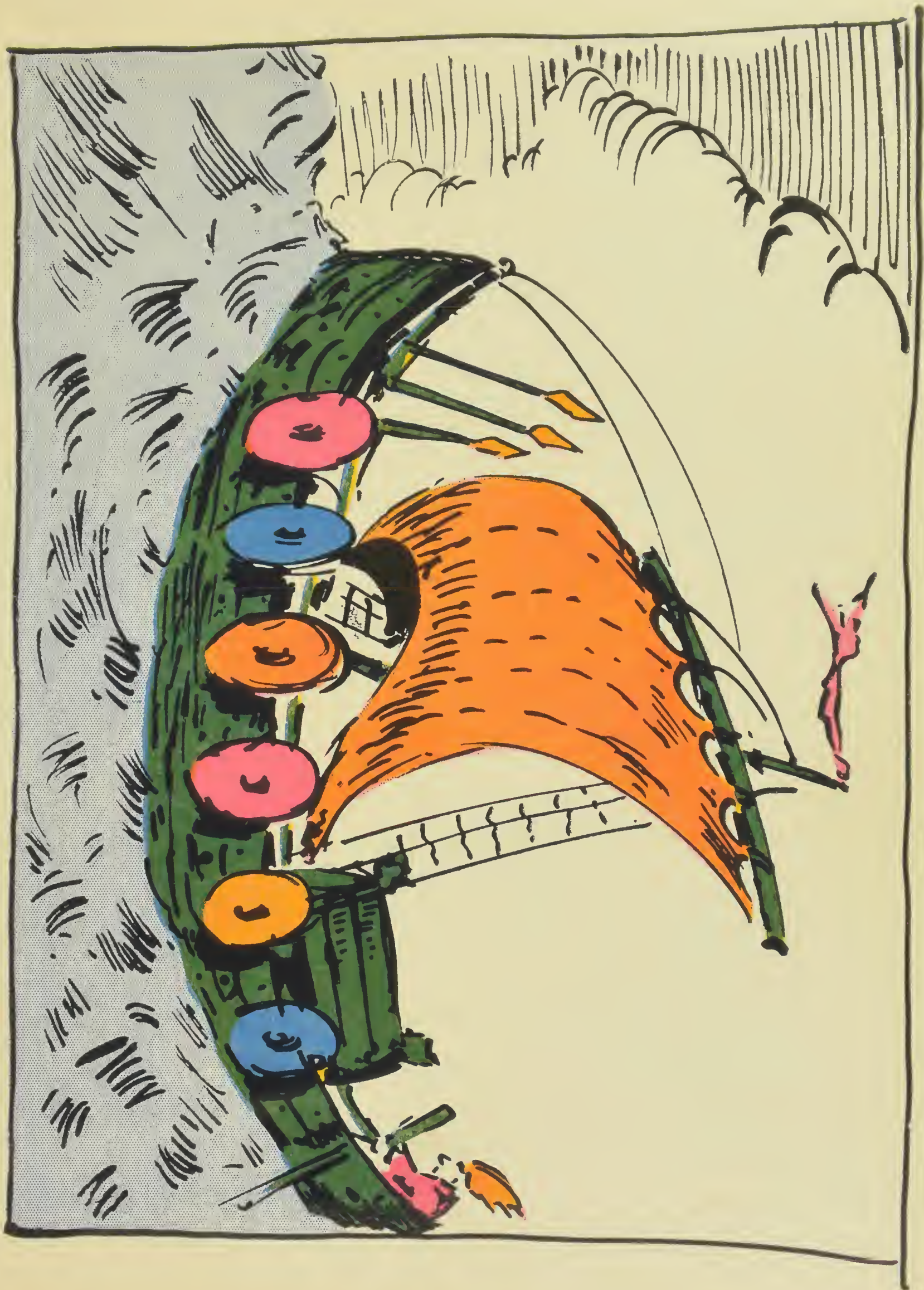
THE HISTORY of these great Teutonic invasions is very interesting, but it does not belong in the present volume. The Teutons and Goths and Vandals and whatever the name may have been of the many hundreds of thousands of invaders kept away from the water. They found all the spoils they wanted on dry land and no people has ever taken to the uncomfortable sea except when driven by dire necessity.

It was in the Northern part of Europe that this necessity was felt, and hence our perusal of the early story of navigation is now transferred to the shores of another Peninsula, called Scandinavia. Scandinavia consists of high mountains and very deep harbors. Here and there we find space for a poor pasture and a few cows and a goat or two. But a husky Norwegian family could not live on a few cows and a goat or two. Therefore the surplus members of such a family, if they were boys, were kindly requested to leave home and shift for themselves. Nowadays in America a boy who has to make his own way looks for a job in a business office or on a farm. In Scandinavia there were neither business offices nor farms. But there was the sea. And the young men of that part of the world took to piracy as a duck takes to water or a bird to the sky.



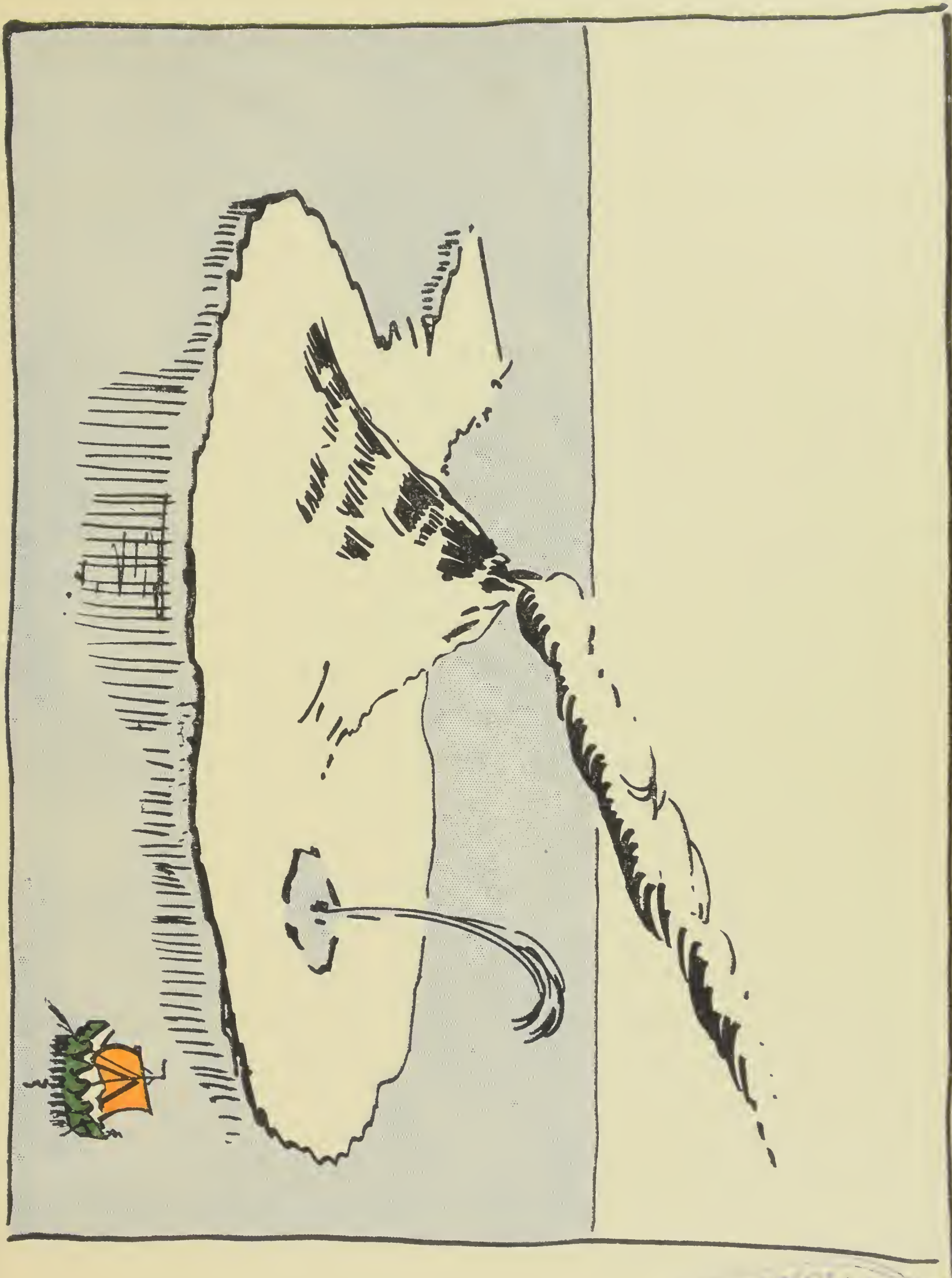
*Soon the ships of the Vikings were seen upon
all the watery highways and byways
of Europe*

THE SHIPS of these Norsemen are very well known to us. The people of Scandinavia were heathen. When one of their great Sea Kings died they buried him, together with his ship and his arms and some slaves who were to wait upon his needs in Walhalla. They dug a deep hole in the earth and then covered ship and men and arms with a low mound. In our own day the historians of Norway have discovered these mounds and they have very carefully taken away the earth until the ship has become visible. When you go to Christiania you can see two of these ships. They are very impressive. Not because they are so large but because they are so small. Instinctively you feel a deep respect and admiration for men who were willing to risk their lives in such a clumsy and insignificant looking craft. The average oyster fisher would not think of crossing the ocean in his little scow. The Norsemen, with vessels of twenty and thirty tons, sailed as far as the Black Sea and the coast of America. There was no extra deck on board these ships, but there was a little wooden house, resembling the blockhouses of the earliest American settlers. In these the women and perhaps the Captain could take a nap when the ship was not flooded by the high waves. The vessels had a flat bottom. It was easy to pull them on shore when night came and navigation became dangerous. The steering was done with a large wooden rudder, and the shields of the soldiers were hung across the sides, making a safe bulwark against hostile arrows.



*The Norsemen sailed westward until they
finally reached Iceland, an Island con-
sisting of a Geyser and a Volcano*

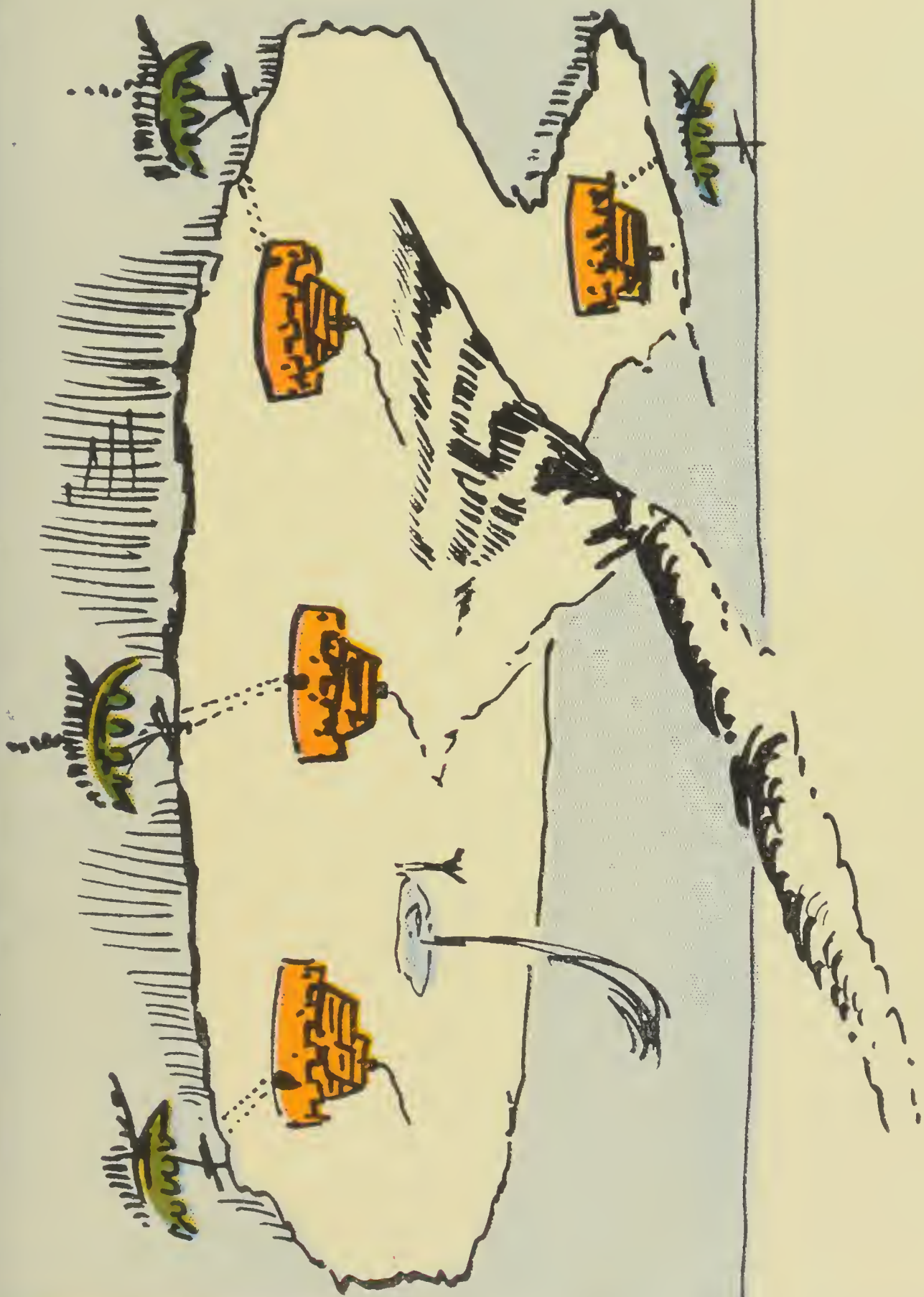
I COULD WRITE volumes about the trips of these Norsemen and how they founded Kingdoms of their own in France and in Italy and even in Russia, and how they conquered England and how they have shaped our own language and our own ideas about the State and Government and a thousand other things. But all that must wait for another book. It is our business now to sail the seas, and I must tell you how the Norsemen dared to leave the sight of land (which the Greeks and the Romans rarely did) and how they pushed westward until they discovered a big island near the polar circle. We call it Iceland. Rainland would have been a better name, because the poor Icelanders have more need of umbrellas than of galoshes. The Island is quite fertile and is kept warm by a Volcano (the Hekla) and by a number of Geysers. This word is almost pronounced like Kaiser, but it means something very different. It is a lot of hot water which spouts every once in a while.



PROVINCIAL
1901

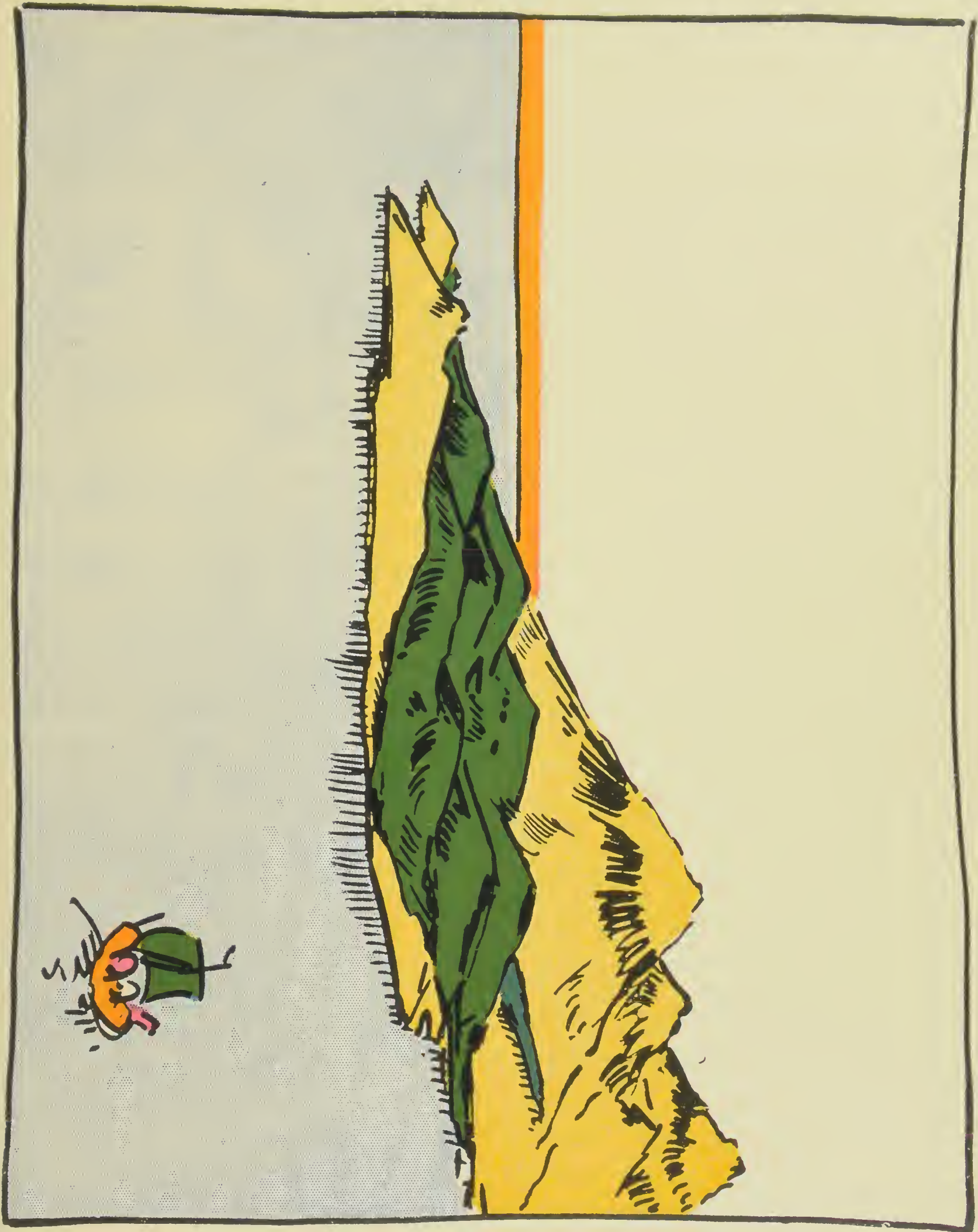
*Soon many people moved from Scandinavia
to Iceland and made themselves
at home*

THE DISCOVERY of this new land meant to the poor Norsemen of Scandinavia what the opening up of the plains meant to many people in America during the first fifty years of the last century. Those Norsemen who did not prosper at home now sailed westward and began a new career in a new land. That, however, is not the only thing which interests us in their history. They are remarkable for something else besides the courage of the earliest emigrants. To their new Fatherland the Norsemen took their old love of liberty and their ancient capacity for managing their own affairs. During sixty years of the eighth and the ninth centuries the colonists were engaged in building up their farms. Then they organized their government. They established a sort of town meeting which all the independent farmers of the entire island attended. This was called the "Althing" and the institution still survives. When we pride ourselves upon our great aptitude for self-government it is well to remember that our own Independent commonwealth has only existed for a little over a century. The people of Iceland have done this sort of thing for more than a thousand years. They began it six centuries before Columbus sailed across the ocean and discovered America.



*In the year 983 the Norsemen pushed still
further westward and Eric, called the
Red, discovered Greenland*

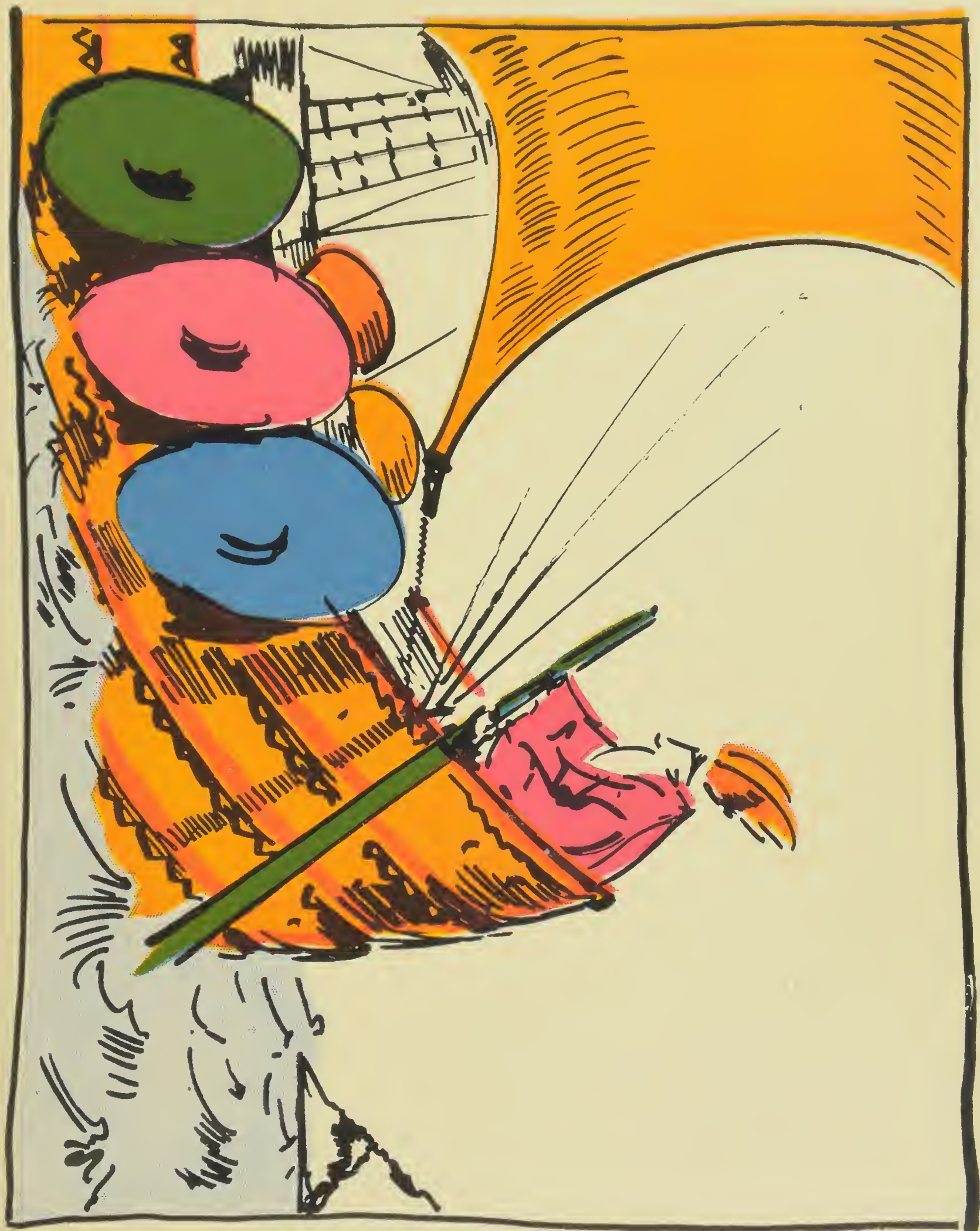
ABOUT ONE hundred years after the first settlement of Iceland, the Norsemen pushed further towards the West and discovered Greenland. For a long time they had known about high mountains arising from the sea somewhere to the northwest of Iceland. Gunnbjorn, the son of Ulf Kraka, had been blown out of his course and had returned home with a story of mysterious lands. This puzzled many Norsemen. They were true explorers, and an explorer is a man who always wants to know what there is "just around the next corner." In the year 982 Eric the Red sailed for Greenland and spent almost three years exploring the coast of this vast island which is almost a continent in itself. In 985 he returned to Iceland, and in order to get candidates for emigration to the new country he called it Greenland. This name suggested beautiful pastures and rich verdure and at once 25 families made ready to leave for this new Paradise. Only fourteen out of the twenty-five ships ever reached the coast of Greenland, but these founded a small settlement and soon other Norsemen followed until quite a large colony inhabited this vast land. They built churches (for missionaries sent by the King of Norway had made the inhabitants Christians), and of these we may see the ruins, together with the old house of Eric, to this very day.



*In the year 1000 (an easy date to remember)
Leif, the son of Eric, set sail for
the West*

SOME TIME during the reign of King Svend Estridsson in Denmark, a monarch who lived between the years 1047 and 1076, a certain German by the name of Adam of Bremen went to Copenhagen to investigate some doubtful historical points. There he heard that the Norsemen had discovered a new land, called Vinland, or the land of Wine. It was not a fantastic land. People had actually been there and had reported that it was a fertile country and grew wild grapes out of which wine could be made and also grain. This story of Adam of Bremen was first published in Hamburg in the year 1595. It has reference to one of the most puzzling questions in the history of navigation—the problem of the earliest discoverers of America. Owing to the faithful labors of many Danish and Norwegian scholars, we now take it for granted that the Norsemen visited the American continent many centuries before Columbus. And it appears to be a fact that they founded a colony in Nova Scotia.

Let me tell you how we happen to know all this so minutely. The people in Iceland have always cared a great deal for knowledge and for scholarship. Everybody in the island can read and write. In former centuries the people also could tell stories. It was not necessary for them to write things down on paper. From father to son, the famous deeds of the ancestors were repeated and repeated until finally everybody on the island knew of Leif the son of Eric and his famous voyage to Vinland.



*At last he saw land. It was the coast of
America*

LEIF, IT APPEARS from the Saga written down by Hauk Erlendsson between the years 1310 and 1320, was the son of Eric, the first man to settle in Greenland. In the year 999 Leif went back to the old home-land of his Father and visited the court of King Olaf Tryggvason of Norway. The King liked this young man from the west and encouraged him to become a Christian and return to his own people to spread the gospel. Leif agreed. In the year 1000 he bade farewell to Norway and sailed for home. For many weeks he was tossed about by the angry sea and finally he saw land. He hoped that it might be Greenland, but the coast was very flat and no mountains were visible. Leif went ashore, found many vines (whether he means vines or wineberries we do not know), sailed along the coast for a few weeks, and then succeeded in reaching his own village in Greenland. Of course he told the people of this mysterious land, and his brother Thorstein became so curious that he sailed at once for the West and tried to find the land of which Leif had told him. Thorstein, however, found nothing. He came home discouraged and died. His widow, Gudrid, soon afterwards married an Ice-lander by the name of Thorfinn Karlsefni. Thorfinn decided to take up the quest of the new land, and in the year 1003 he went west with four vessels and 160 men and women.



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*A few years later a large number of Norsemen
settled down on this new land, which
we now call Nova Scotia*

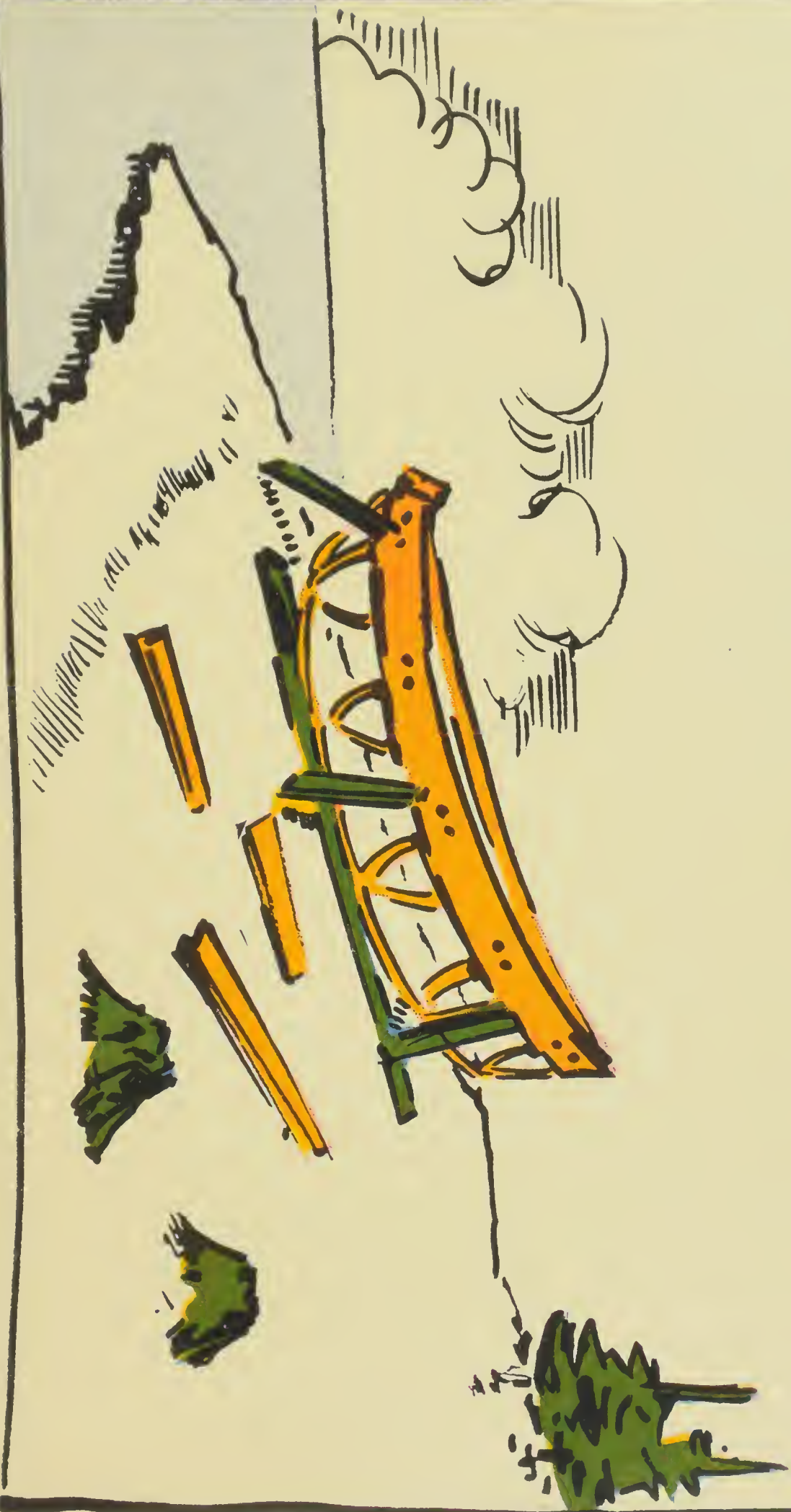
HE FOUND the land of which Leif had brought the first reports and built a small settlement. The climate was mild and there was little snow. The cattle could graze in the fields almost all the year round.

There were vast wheat fields which apparently had planted themselves. There were berries or grapes out of which wine could be made. Indeed, to the people who were obliged to live on the barren coast of Greenland it seemed that this new country was a Paradise.

A son was born to Thorfinn and Gudrid and they called him Snorri.

As the land grew many big trees there was wood enough for the purpose of ship-building. All in all the country might have developed as a new Norse colony, and today America might speak Icelandic rather than English, but for the interference of the natives. We have no reason to suppose that these natives were Red Indians. The descriptions of the Sagas indicate Eskimos. "One morning," so the ancient story tells us, "there appeared from the sea a number of canoes. In these canoes were ill-looking and swarthy men with large eyes and broad cheeks and ugly long hair on their heads."

Soon afterward these visitors disappeared. But next year they came back.



*The Eskimo, attacking the Norse colony
from his little canoe, drove the earliest
settlers away*

THIS TIME a fight occurred between Norsemen and Eskimos. Of course the Norsemen had much better weapons at their disposal than the Eskimos. But there were so many more Eskimos than colonists that danger existed of the entire settlement being murdered out. Thorfinn, therefore, decided to go back to Greenland. In the fall of the year 1006 he sailed for Greenland. The next year he returned to Iceland, where his descendants still live. One of those was Hauk Erlendsson, who wrote down the account of his great-great-grandfather's adventures.

All this we know from so many independent sources that we can accept it as the truth. Whether any further Norse expeditions ever reached Vinland we do not know. There are historians who believe that they explored Labrador and Newfoundland as well as Nova Scotia. It is possible. In the year 1123 the sagas tell of a Greenland bishop who went in search of Vinland. Not a word was ever heard from him. Did he reach America and did he survive or was he driven into the arctic seas and frozen to death? We do not know, but the discovery, a few years ago, of a number of Eskimos who are apparently of white descent seems to show that certain Norse sailors were driven to America, lost all touch with the homeland, and finally returned to a state of semi-wildness as Eskimos.



*After the year 1448 no further news floated
from Greenland to Europe. The island
was forgotten*

AS FOR Greenland, this half-way post on the road to America, it suffered from a similar fate to that of Vinland. It was forgotten. The reason is not quite clear. Probably the terrible epidemic which spread all over northern Europe in the late middle ages, and which we call the "Black Death," had something to do with it. This disease killed so many people that there was nobody left to go to the colonies. Furthermore, the Kings of Norway who regarded Greenland as their own possession were not very wise in their management of the distant island. Slowly but very definitely the Greenland settlements began to decline. The Bishops soon found that they were without a flock and returned to Iceland and Norway. Those who could afford to pack their belongings on a ship sailed for home. Those who were too weak or too poor or too indolent to leave, stayed behind and finally died, or were killed by the Eskimos.

In a document issued by Pope Nicholas V in the year 1448 we hear the name of Greenland mentioned for the last time. After that for more than a hundred years Greenland is forgotten. Finally in the year 1585 John Davis rediscovered the island, but it was not until well within the seventeenth century that we commenced to know as much about Greenland as the Norsemen had done. At present it is a Danish colony. There are about sixty trading stations and it is the only part of the world where municipal councils are held in the Eskimo language.



After that, the general ignorance of the medieval skipper and his superstitious fear of wild monsters made navigation almost impossible

AND NOW we enter a period when exploration came almost to a standstill. During the middle ages the people of Europe, flocking into the waste space of western Europe, just as the American settlers of the year 1849 flocked into the waste space of the western plains, had been too much occupied with the business of "settling down" to spend any surplus energy upon exploring expeditions. There were other causes. The nautical instruments of the early medieval navigator were of the most primitive variety. The Norsemen conquered Europe by keeping close to the shore. Whenever they left the sight of dry land they sailed on good luck. Sometimes they reached their destination. Very often they missed it and perished.

Early in the twelfth century a rudimentary compass had been invented or imported from China and had become known in western Europe. But it was by no means a precise instrument and it was not generally used until the year 1400. The mariner depended for his information upon the starry heaven. In the northern seas this starry heaven was usually so cloudy that the position of the ship could not be determined. On land it was comparatively easy to make the necessary astronomical observations to fix the whereabouts of the traveller. But the rolling and unsteady bridge of a small schooner, combined with the awkward construction of an early astrolabe, made the practical art of sailing by the stars a very risky one.



*It was generally believed that the earth was
flat and square. There was grave
danger of falling off*

BUT IT WAS not only the risk of being blown out of their course or hitting rocks or banks which made the medieval skipper refrain from prolonged voyages. He was afraid of the unknown. There was a rumor abroad that the earth was flat. When you reached the outer limits of the ocean,

r

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SPLASH

down you went, and you never were seen again on this earth. Of course this sounds very amusing in the year 1921. But the medieval mariner had the same fear for the sombre solitude of the mighty ocean which little children have when they are requested to go all alone into a dark room. A cheerful whale playing tag with a small sailing vessel was apt to frighten even the most hardy of old sailors. Innocent porpoises, racing past the ship, caused a panic. The phosphorescent light of the sea after sunset made people anticipate the most terrible accidents.

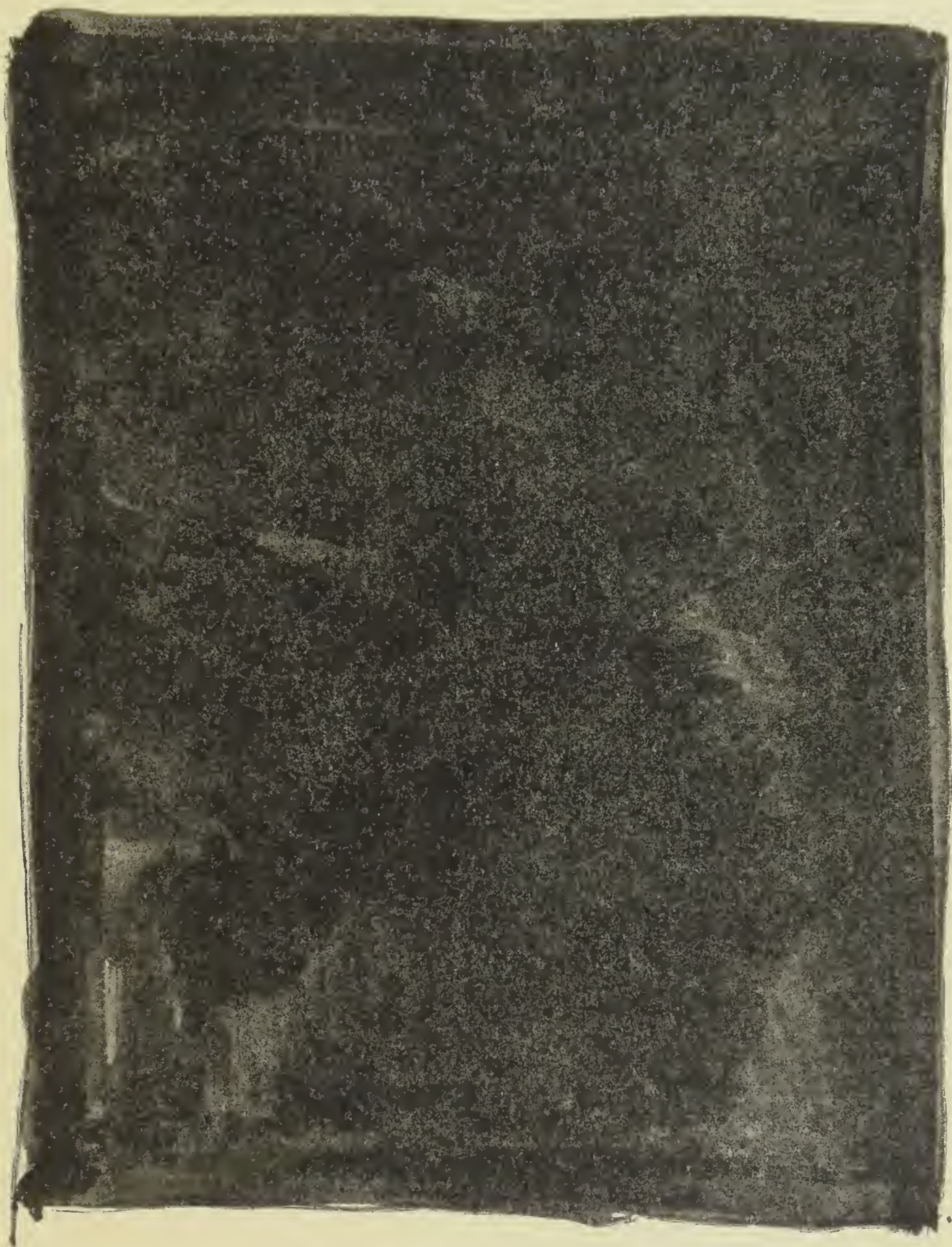


*For many years our geographical knowledge
was wrapped in complete darkness*

IT WAS AN age when the active imagination of man had constructed a make-believe world of good spirits and wicked imps and when every natural phenomenon was at once attributed to a supernatural cause.

Fear—the overpowering fear of ignorant people—influenced the acts of all sailors. They were very courageous when they had to combat an enemy or an evil which was tangible, which they could see and hear and touch. But they kept away from the vague powers which live in the empty spaces between ocean and sky. And it was not until the days of Prince Henry, the Navigator of Portugal, who began his career early in the fifteenth century, that the exploits of the Norsemen of the ninth and tenth and eleventh centuries were repeated by men of the white race.

For almost three centuries, between the years 1100 and 1400, we can speak of the dark ages of navigation.

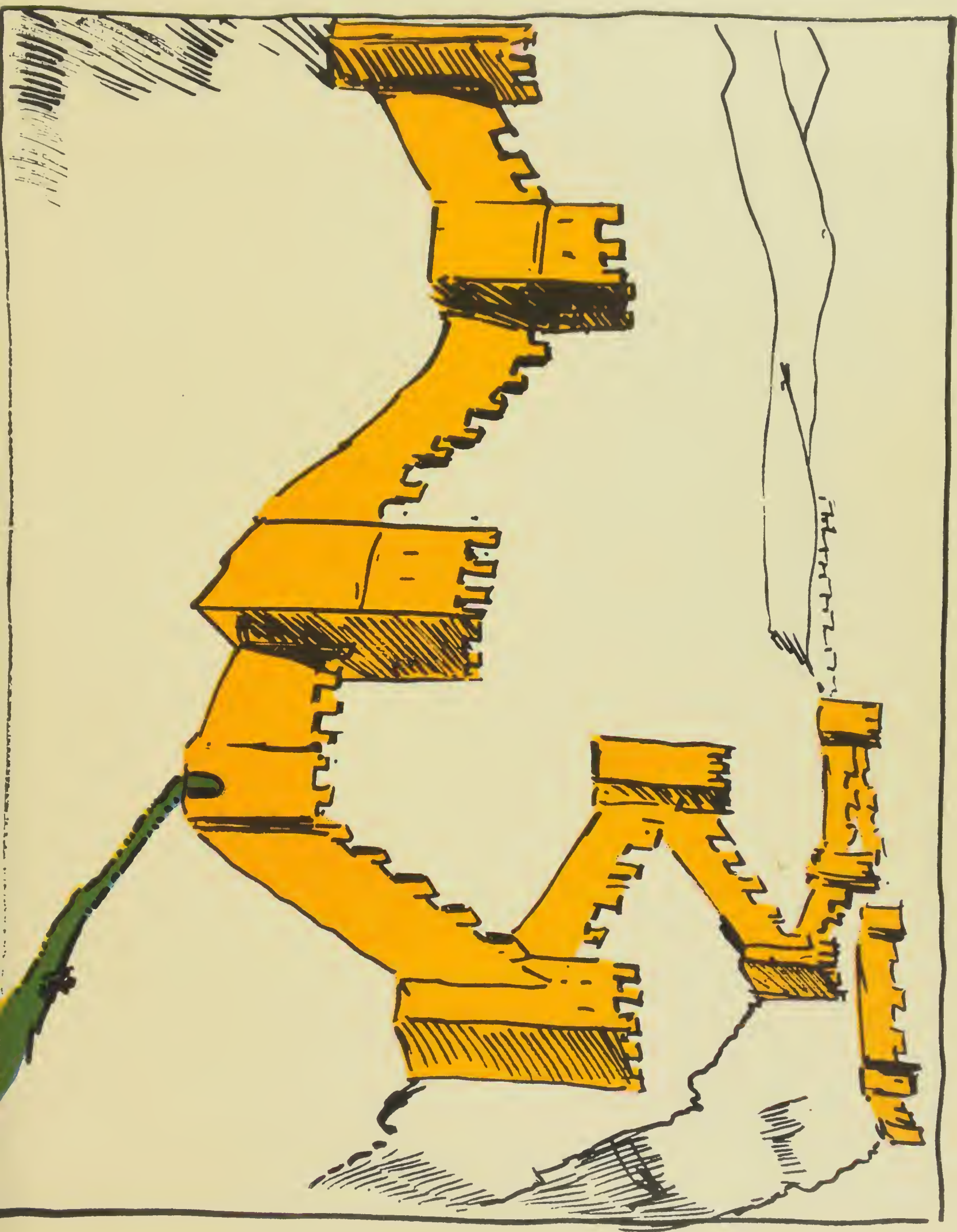


During the second half of the thirteenth century Marco Polo, a Venetian explorer, discovered China

THIS DID not mean that the European people had lost all curiosity about their neighbors. On the contrary. But they preferred to go on foot rather than on board a ship. And as pedestrians, they made several wonderful journeys which carried them all over Asia and through the Northern part of Africa.

Of these travelers none has become so famous as Marco Polo, the Venetian.

Marco Polo lived from 1254 until 1324. When he was born his father and uncle were away from their native city. They had started upon a business trip to central Asia. There they met the great Khan, named Kublai, who asked them to come back to his court. Hence in the year 1271 they returned to the East, taking young Marco with them. They travelled by way of Bagdad and Khorassan, Kashgar, Yarkand, Khatan, through Lob Nor and across the immense Gobi Desert. At last they reached the Khan's court in the year 1275. The Tartar chieftain liked the young Venetian and asked him to go upon a trip for him through Burma, Yunnan, the Karakorum districts, Cochín-China and India. You had better look all these places up on your map and you will get some idea of the territory which a single man could rule in the middle ages.

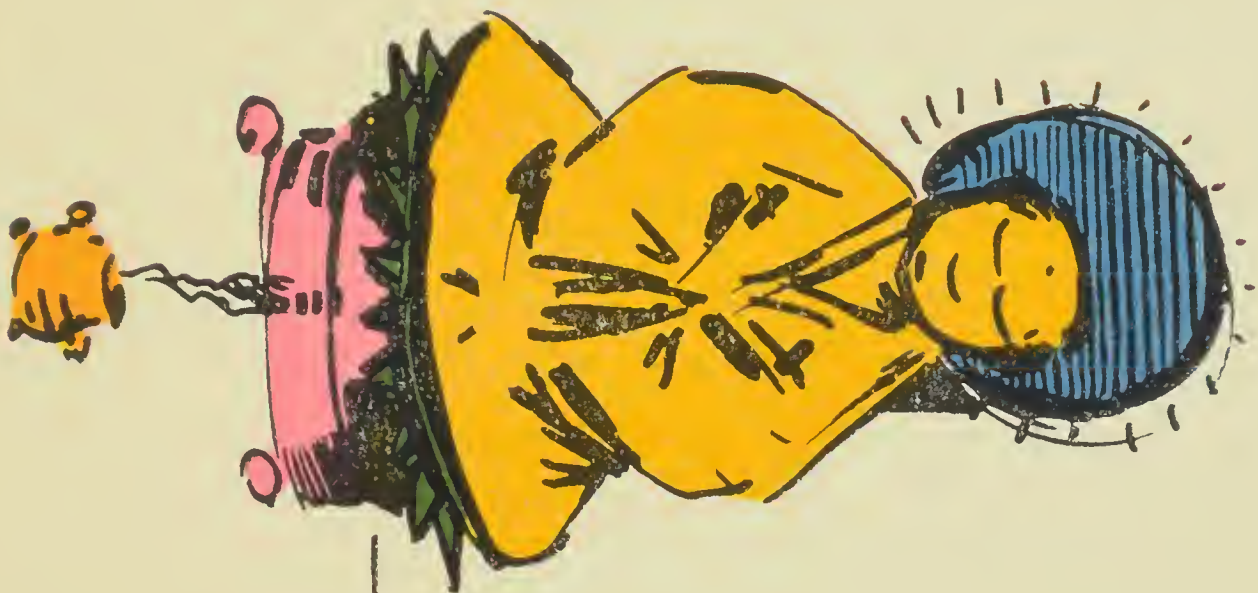


The people in China worshipped strange gods

FOR THREE years Marco Polo was the governor of the province of Yang Chow. Then he managed to return to Europe by way of Sumatra and India and Persia. He reached Venice in 1295. He had been away for such a long time that his own relatives did not know him and believed him to be an impostor. But at last they recognized him and he was asked to tell the story of the strange sights which his eyes had seen in the distant lands of Cathay. Just at that moment, however, there was a war raging between Venice and Genoa. Marco Polo was made commander of a Venetian man-of-war, and in the battle of Curzola he was made a prisoner. To while away the dreary weeks of his captivity he wrote an account of his travels and in this way we have a very accurate description of China and India and Central Asia during the middle ages.

The book in its original form is rather dull reading. Marco Polo did not have the gift of amusing narrative. But it is an immense storehouse of information about places which no white man had ever seen and some of which have not been revisited until our own day.

A route of travel for the entire length of Asia is here described. We hear of Kingdoms of which all but the name has long since disappeared.

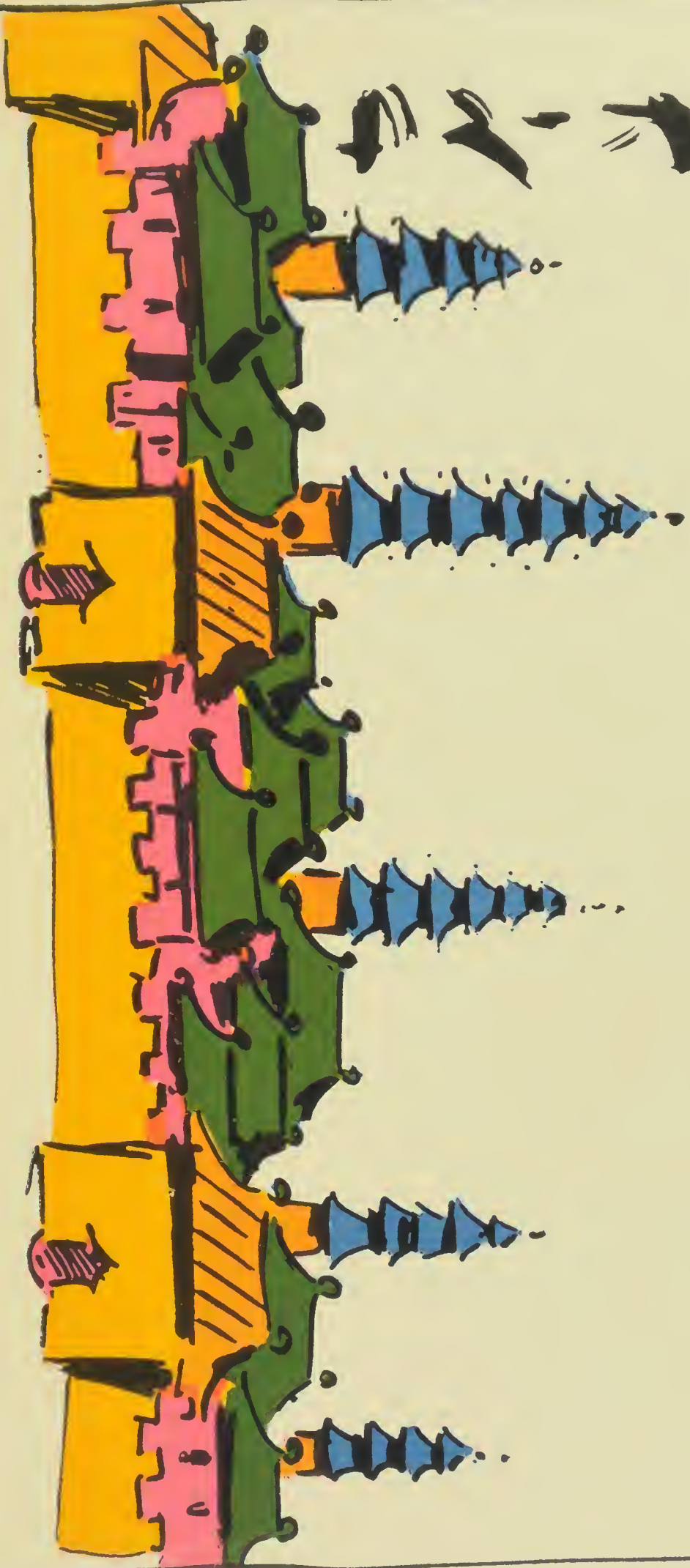


*They lived in wonderful cities with high towers
and golden walls*

WE LEARN about Thibet, opened to the inspection of the white man only a few years ago by an English expedition. Siam and Burma and Cochinchina become more than geographical definitions. Java and Ceylon and Sumatra and the great island of Japan are described to us so that we can recognize the very spot which Marco Polo visited. But that is not all. Marco Polo interviewed all the people he met upon his many trips. He gives us details about Siberia and Eskimo dogs and he has heard about Abyssinia in Africa and about the vague town of Zanzibar and even about Madagascar, the island off the east coast of Africa, which was not discovered until many centuries later.

I can not give you the details of this most wonderful of all medieval expeditions. You can easily get a little book which will tell you all the more important events of Marco Polo's adventures. Do not borrow it from a library. Buy a cheap edition. There is nothing nicer than to own a few good books and keep them nearby, like very excellent friends.

五塔寺



The first scientific navigator of the west was Prince Henry of Portugal

THE HONOR of putting navigation and exploring expeditions upon a thoroughly scientific basis belongs to a Portuguese Prince. His name was Henry and he was a son of King João I of Portugal and the Princess Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt. Most of his discoveries were made along the African shore, but it is very doubtful whether we ever should have reached America without the preparatory labor of Prince Henry. When you look at the map you will see how a chain of small islands stretches out from the African coast many hundred miles westward into the great ocean. These islands, which were discovered during the fourteenth century and the most important one of which was found by Prince Henry in 1418, served as a sort of jumping-board for the earliest American travelers.

Prince Henry was born in 1394 and died in 1460. He knew how to sail a ship better than any of his contemporaries. He founded a school where small boys were trained for the sea, and he erected an astronomical observatory where learned monks used to study the heavens and draw charts for the benefit of the skipper who has lost his way at sea.

In short, Prince Henry next to Columbus is one of the most important figures in the history of discovery.



Columbus was born in Genoa

CRISTOBAL COLON, or, as we know him, Christopher Columbus, was born in Genoa some time between 1446 and 1451. He was the eldest son of Domenico Colombo, a simple woolcomber. His mother was Suzanna Fontanarossa. We do not know very much about his earliest years. We do not have any information about his family. The name Colombo, meaning "pigeon," is quite common in Italy. There are so many Colombos in the heavy old parchment books, which contain the registers of those who were born or died, that we can not tell which is our particular pigeon. Some people have claimed that Columbus was French or Irish or a Jew. It does not matter so very much but we should like to have more definite information about a man of such strong convictions and such great courage. Such men are very rare. It is a simple matter to stay at home and do what everybody else does. But it is very difficult to set out to discover a new continent or even a new trade-route when the whole world sits down to laugh at you and when even the wisest of men call you all sorts of a fool and an impostor.



As a boy, Columbus studied astronomy, geometry, and cosmography at the university of Pavia

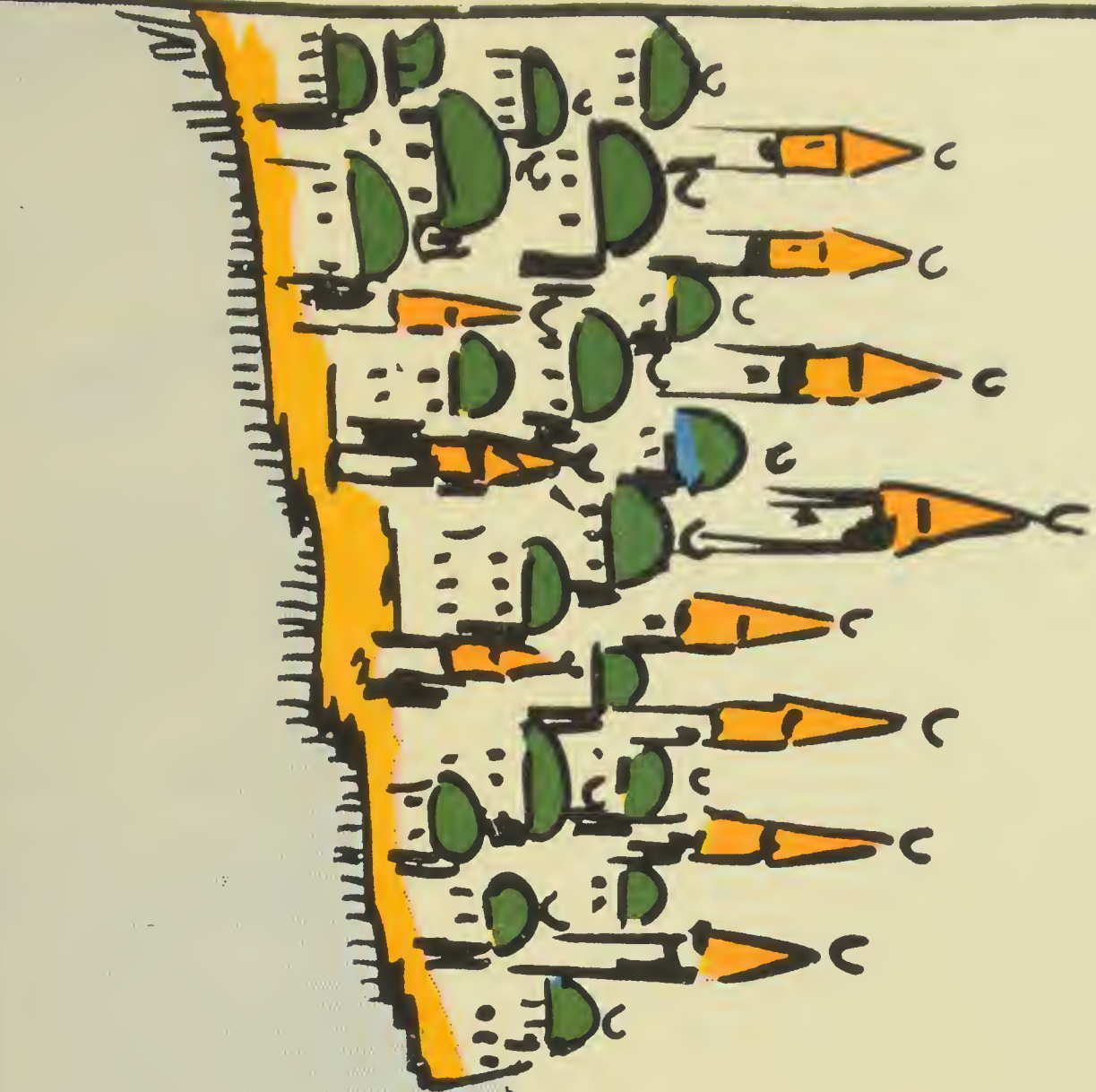
THE LIFE of Columbus was written by his son Ferdinand. According to this story (which is not entirely trustworthy) Columbus, as a small boy, was sent to the famous university of Pavia. There he studied mathematics and astronomy and cosmography. This word means the description of the Cosmos, and cosmography is a science which teaches the constitution of the whole system of worlds.

It may seem strange to you that so small a boy should go to a University. But in the olden days boys were obliged to work very hard when very young. And Columbus was no exception. When he went to sea he knew the mathematical side of his profession thoroughly. He could read the stars at night and he could find his way on any map. He could draw maps himself and he knew all about currents and winds and the influence of the moon upon the tide. All this proved to be very useful afterward. Columbus was no chance explorer who hit upon his discoveries by luck. He was a hard-working scientist who first sat down before a sheet of paper and puzzled out his problems. Then when he had come to a theoretical conclusion he had the courage of his convictions and began to make preparations for the practical application of his investigations.



*Columbus visited the Levant and was familiar
with all the Turkish harbors of the
Mediterranean*

AT THE AGE of sixteen Columbus shipped as a cabin boy and went through all the ranks of the service. He sailed to all the harbors of the Mediterranean. He visited the island of Chios several times and it seems that he spent a few months on the shores of one of the ancient Greek islands. Very likely he went as far as Constantinople, which had been conquered by the Turks just when he was born. The town of Constantinople is many thousand miles away from America. Yet it plays an involuntary rôle in the discovery of our great continent. Until the middle of the fifteenth century all the Asiatic trade had centered in the capital of the Byzantine Empire, as we call the eastern remnant of the old Roman Empire. The spices and the products of the Indies were carried first to Constantinople and from there to Venice and Genoa and to the rest of the world. When the Turks took this famous trading center, Europe was cut off from the Orient. It was necessary to look for a new route to the Indies and to Cathay, as the middle ages called China. This was the thought which spooked in the head of Columbus. He did not suspect that a broad continent was stretched between Europe and the east coast of Asia. As a matter of fact, he did not know this when he died in the year 1506. He himself believed that America was the name for a few islands on the road between Spain and Cathay. During all his voyages he was looking for China and the Indies, cut off from Europe through the Turkish conquest of Constantinople.



*In February of the year 1477 Columbus seems
to have visited Iceland*

TO PREPARE himself for his great work, the discovery of the western road to the Indies, Columbus made many voyages along the west coast of Europe and Africa. In the summer of the year 1476 he joined four Genoese vessels bound for England. They sailed through the straits of Gibraltar and made for Cape Saint Vincent. Here they were attacked by a French buccaneer and two of the ships were lost. The other two escaped and safely reached Lisbon, where Columbus met many sailors who had graduated in the school of Prince Henry. In December of the same year he continued his voyage and visited England. We hear of him in Bristol and in Galway. This city is on the west coast of Ireland. The English had for a long time carried on trade with Iceland. Very likely Columbus heard stories of the Ultima Thule, as Iceland was then called. According to his own testimony he visited Iceland, where the memory of Greenland and the lost Vinland colonies was still surviving in the year 1477. Learned historians have filled many books with discussions about this mysterious Thule. The expression means the outskirts of the habitable world in the arctic circle. The name has been given to Norway, to Iceland, and to the Shetland Islands. But the latest investigations make it fairly certain that Columbus reached Iceland and returned to Portugal in the same year.



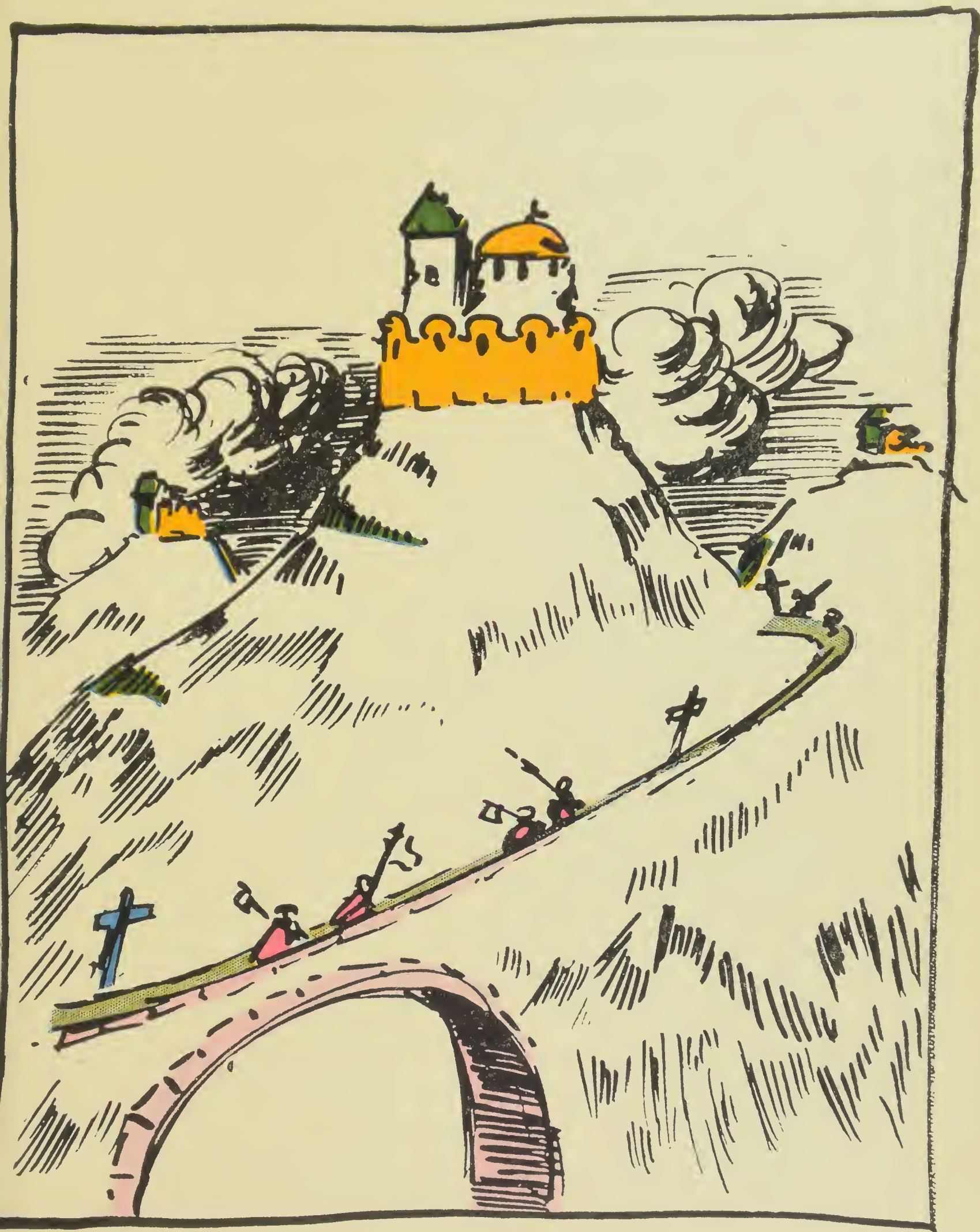
The King of Spain had just driven the Moors out of his Kingdom

IN THE YEAR 1478 Columbus married Felipa Moniz de Perestrello. The Lady was the daughter of Bartholomew Perestrello who had been a captain in the service of Prince Henry the Navigator and who had been the first governor of the African colony of Porto Santo. The Perestrello family was well connected. The Archbishop of Lisbon was a cousin of Columbus' wife.

You will see how all these things worked together for the ultimate benefit of Columbus. He inherited all the papers and nautical notes of his father-in-law. He visited the colony where old Perestrello had been governor and interviewed his former associates. Through his cousin, the archbishop, he had access to the royal school of astronomy. More and more he became convinced that there must be a way of reaching the Indies by sailing due west.

Theoretically this was all very well. But how about the practical side? Where could Columbus find the ships and the men and the money necessary for such a dangerous expedition? He went to King João II of Portugal and explained his ideas. The King referred the matter to a council of famous geographers. They advised him not to have anything to do with Columbus, but to continue the work of Henry the Navigator and look for the Indian route by way of the western and southern coast of Africa.

Then Columbus bethought himself of the neighboring Kingdom of Spain.

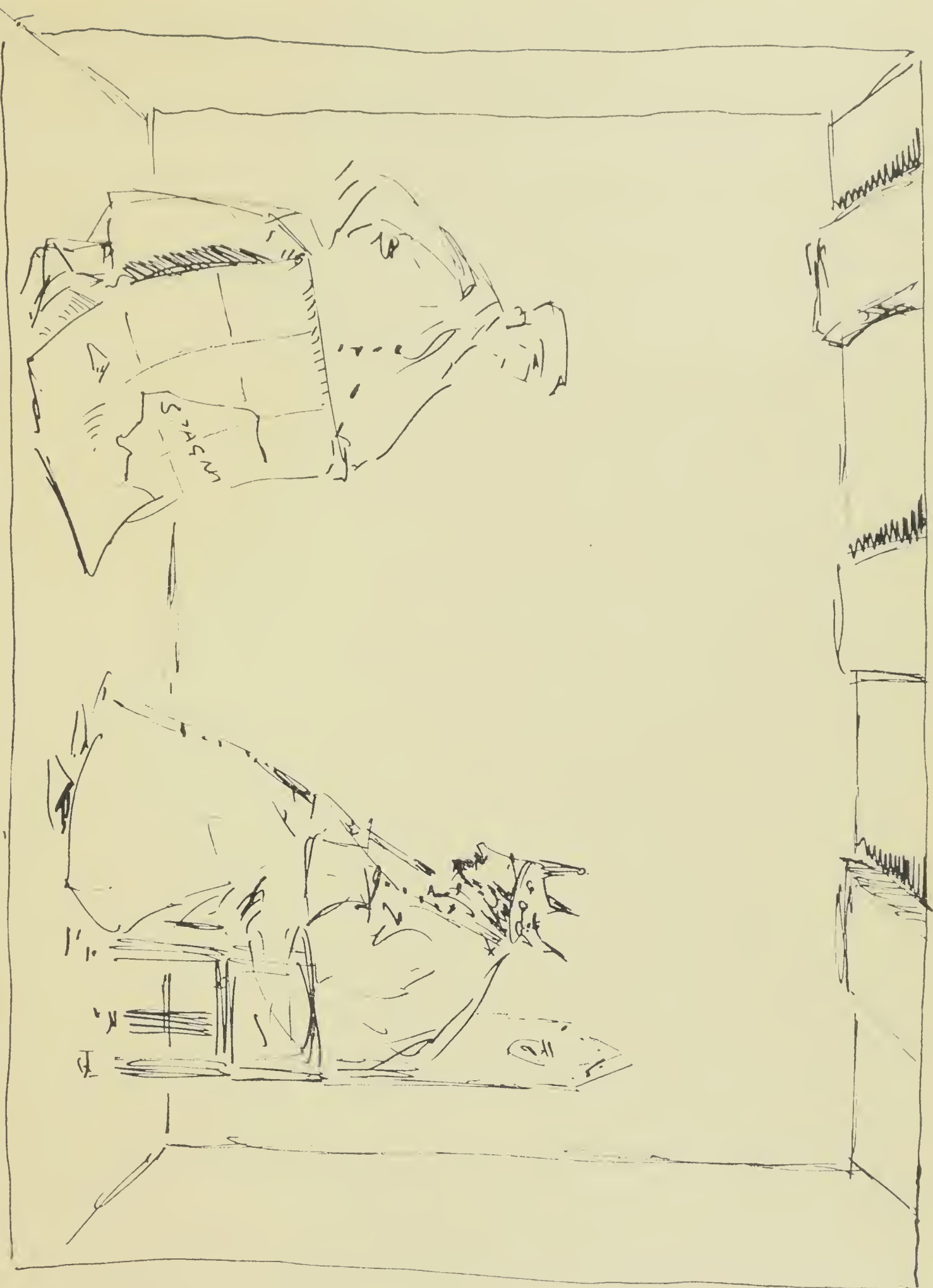


*King Ferdinand listened patiently to the plans
which Columbus submitted to him*

IN SPAIN, King Ferdinand was at that moment driving the last Moorish invaders from his domains. He was ready to encourage the foreign glory of his estates in any way that might prove practicable.

Discouraged by the reception of his ideas in Lisbon, Columbus packed his small trunk. His wife had died, he had not been a great success in a financial way, and was obliged to make a living for himself and his small son Diego by drawing maps and charts. He left Portugal and went to Spain. For several years he lived with the Duke of Medina Celi, who was interested in his ideas.

At last Columbus was allowed to lay his plans before King Ferdinand and his wife, the Queen Isabella. As they did not know much about navigation they referred the whole matter to a committee of which the Queen's confessor was the Chairman. This dignitary did not believe the scheme to be possible. For even granted that the world was round (and people were by no means certain of this in the year 1491), then how could you hope to sail back once you had sailed down the slopes of our little globe? It seemed a sheer waste of money, and the committee advised that no support be given to the Genoese adventurer. Columbus despaired and thought of leaving Spain. But when he was already on his way to France or England (he did not know where he should turn next for help), the Cardinal Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza heard of the navigator and his Indian projects. He offered to assist him.



Somebody took my match to light his pipe. I must use my pen
knife! get another box of matches.

F. V. L.

*On the third of August of the year 1492
Columbus left Spain with three
small ships*

ON THE second of January of the year 1492 King Ferdinand took Grenada, the last Moorish city in Spain, and in April of the same year the town of Palos was ordered to give the Genoese mariner Cristobal Colon (as the Spaniards called him) two vessels. At last Columbus had his ships. But where to get men? Nobody wanted to risk his life on a wild-goose chase for Cathay and Zipangu or Japan or whatever the crazy Genoese expected to find. Even the King and Queen seemed to lose confidence, and it was due to the support of two rich merchants of Palos that the expedition was finally equipped. These men, Martin Alonzo Pinzon and Vincente Yanez Pinzon, provided the necessary funds and early in August of the year 1492 Columbus was ready. He was commander-in-chief of three ships. There was the Santa Maria of 100 tons, which carried the Admiral (as Columbus was called) and 52 men. Then two small caravels, the "Pinta" of 50 tons and 18 men, commanded by Martin Pinzon, and the "Niña" of 40 tons, with 18 men and commanded by Vincente Pinzon. As for the sailors, most of them were down on their luck and of a very rowdy and mutinous disposition. But Columbus, undismayed by the prospects of a turbulent voyage, hoisted sail and left the harbor of Palos on the morning of Friday, the third of August of the year 1492.



Soon the ships were in the Roaring Forties

FIRST OF ALL, the ships made for the Canary Islands, where the "Niña" had to be repaired. Columbus was forced to travel very fast. He knew that three Portuguese men-of-war were trying to intercept him. The Portuguese, who knew more about the road to the Indies than anybody else, did not intend to let a foreigner interfere with their monopoly and they hoped to prevent Columbus from sailing toward the West. The three ships, however, managed to evade their enemies and soon they were in the Roaring Forties, a very turbulent part of the ocean between the fortieth and fiftieth degrees of latitude. Even at this early date the men began to murmur and show signs of discontent. They showed by their behavior that they took no stock in all the wild dreams of their Admiral. They accused him of being a hungry adventurer who was only thinking of himself. Before he left Columbus had made an agreement with the King of Spain by which he was promised one-tenth of all the precious metals which he might discover upon his voyage. And since he was a man of genius and as such believed in his own ability, he had furthermore stipulated that he should be given command over the countries which he might find and should receive the rank of an "Admiral of the Ocean."

Fig.



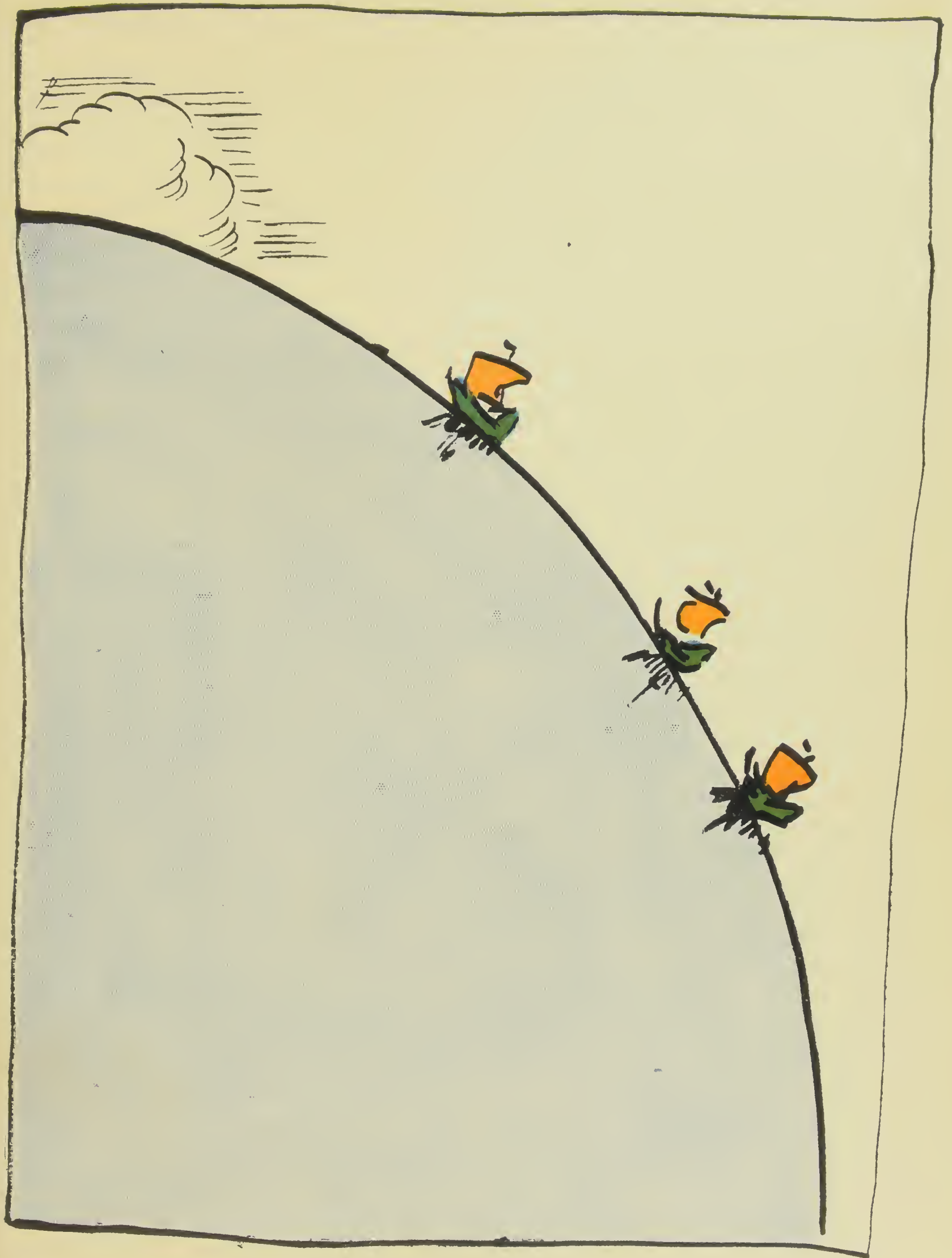
ROPE



Columbus first. A.D. 1492

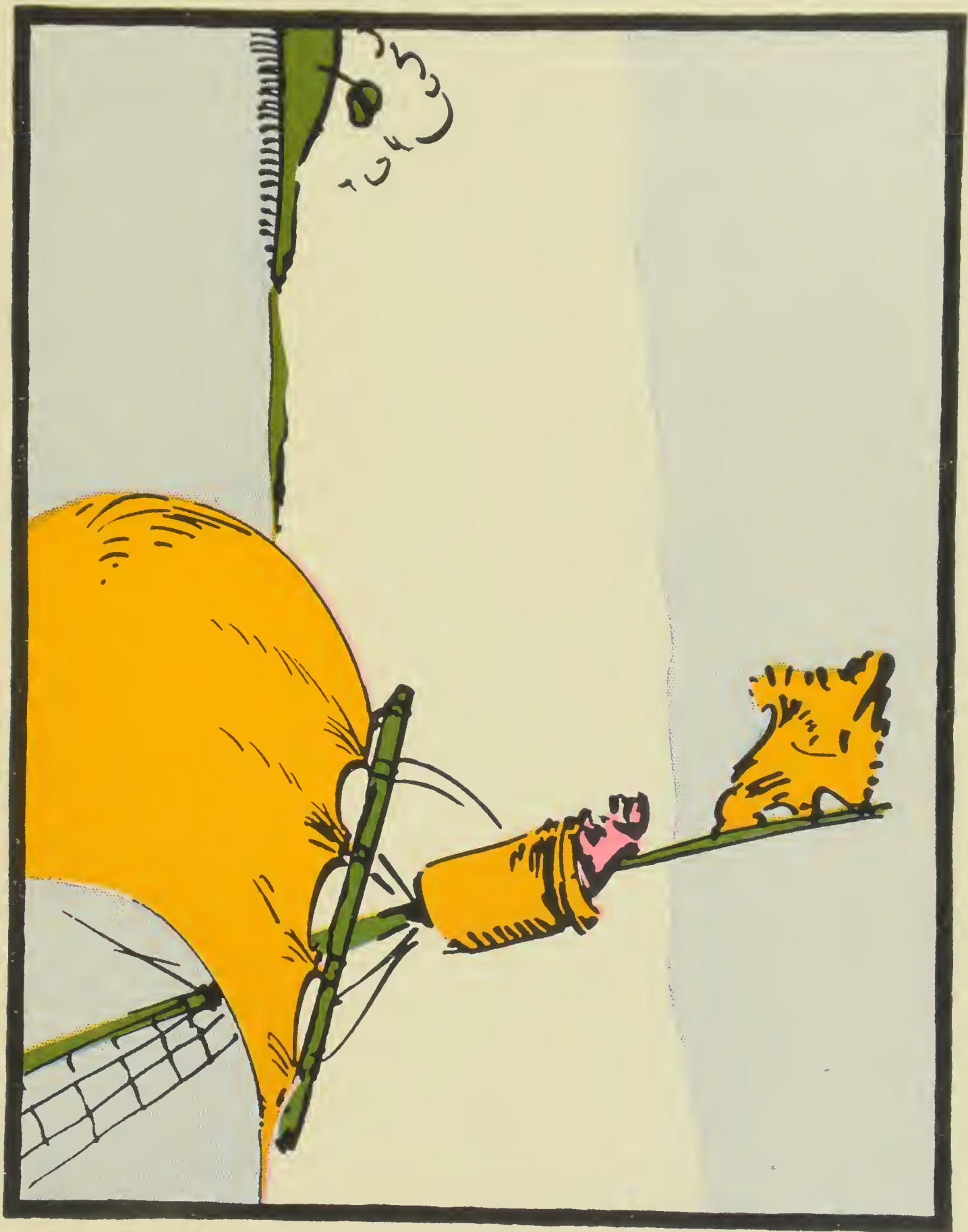
*For six weeks Columbus sailed and sailed and
sailed and saw no land*

THE SAILORS complained that all these fine promises would not do them any good and talked of open mutiny. They were very much frightened by some of the things which they saw. One day a great meteor (a piece of a star which has flown through space until it lands upon the earth) dropped into the water near the ships with a terrible splash. A little later they came into a part of the ocean where the weeds were so thick that it looked as if the ships were sailing through a meadow. They called it the Sea of Saragossa. Then, one morning, to the terrible consternation of all on board, the compass appeared to be out of order. Instead of pointing to the magnetic pole, the little needle went through strange manœuvres and apparently could not find its proper balance. "Verily," the sailors said, "there is black magic on board," and even the sight of some birds could not reconcile them to the idea of being separated further and further from their homes. At last, on the 11th of October, the "Pinta" fished up some wooden sticks which seemed to have been carved by the hand of man. At ten o'clock of that same day Columbus thought that he saw a fire on a nearby shore. He was certain that he had reached the Indies and promised a reward to the first man who should see the land on the next morning.



*At two in the morning of the 12th of October
of the year 1492 America was
discovered*

THAT NIGHT very few of the sailors went to bed. At two o'clock in the morning of the twelfth of October of the year 1492 Rodrigo de Triana, a sailor on board the Niña, saw America. The riddle had been solved. Columbus, as we have said before, did not know that he had found a new continent. But we owe it to his courage and his belief in himself that the ocean was at last crossed by the ships of a modern European state. The voyages of the Norsemen had been of great interest to the intrepid men who undertook them. But Europe did not hear about these until many centuries later. Then the news was of too vague a nature to be of much value. Prejudice and greed and the silly remarks of the large number of people who always shout "it can't be done" about anything that is new had almost prevented the expedition of Columbus. When he proved that it can be done, this same crowd turned suddenly around and revered the despised Genoese as a courageous hero. Be it said to the everlasting glory of the great explorer that he was not discouraged by his disappointments and was quite indifferent to praise.



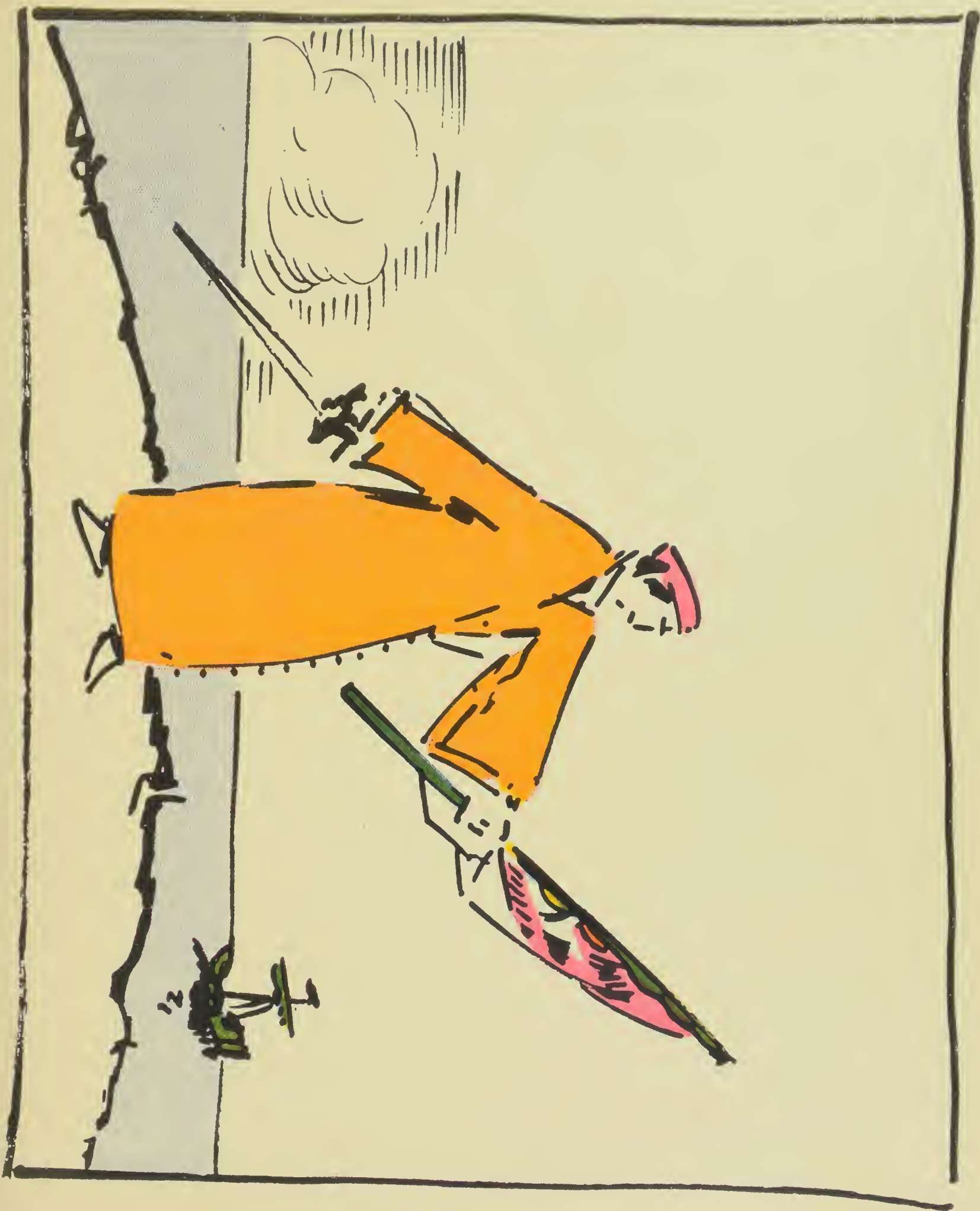
*In the name of the Spanish Crown Columbus
then took possession of the land which
he had discovered*

EARLY on the morning of the twelfth Columbus went ashore and in the most solemn fashion took possession of this new land for the benefit of the Spanish Crown.

At first no human beings had been visible. Very soon, however, a few naked savages ventured forth from the forest and gazed at the white men with astonished eyes. The Spaniards on their side noticed that these men were of dark and reddish color. And since Columbus believed that he had arrived in the Indies, he called the inhabitants of the island "Indians." As they were somewhat different from the Indians who sometimes visited the harbors of Venice or Genoa, he called them "Red Indians," to keep them apart from the more swarthy variety of which he had read in the works of Marco Polo.

The savages told Columbus that the name of the island was Guanahani. Columbus changed this to "San Salvador." For many years we did not know which of the many West Indian islands might be this mysterious San Salvador. But it appears that Watling Island is the spot where the white man first landed on the outskirts of the American continent.

After a few days Columbus continued his voyage and discovered Cuba and San Domingo and Isabella and Fernandina and Santa Maria de la Concepcion. On San Domingo he built a fortification.

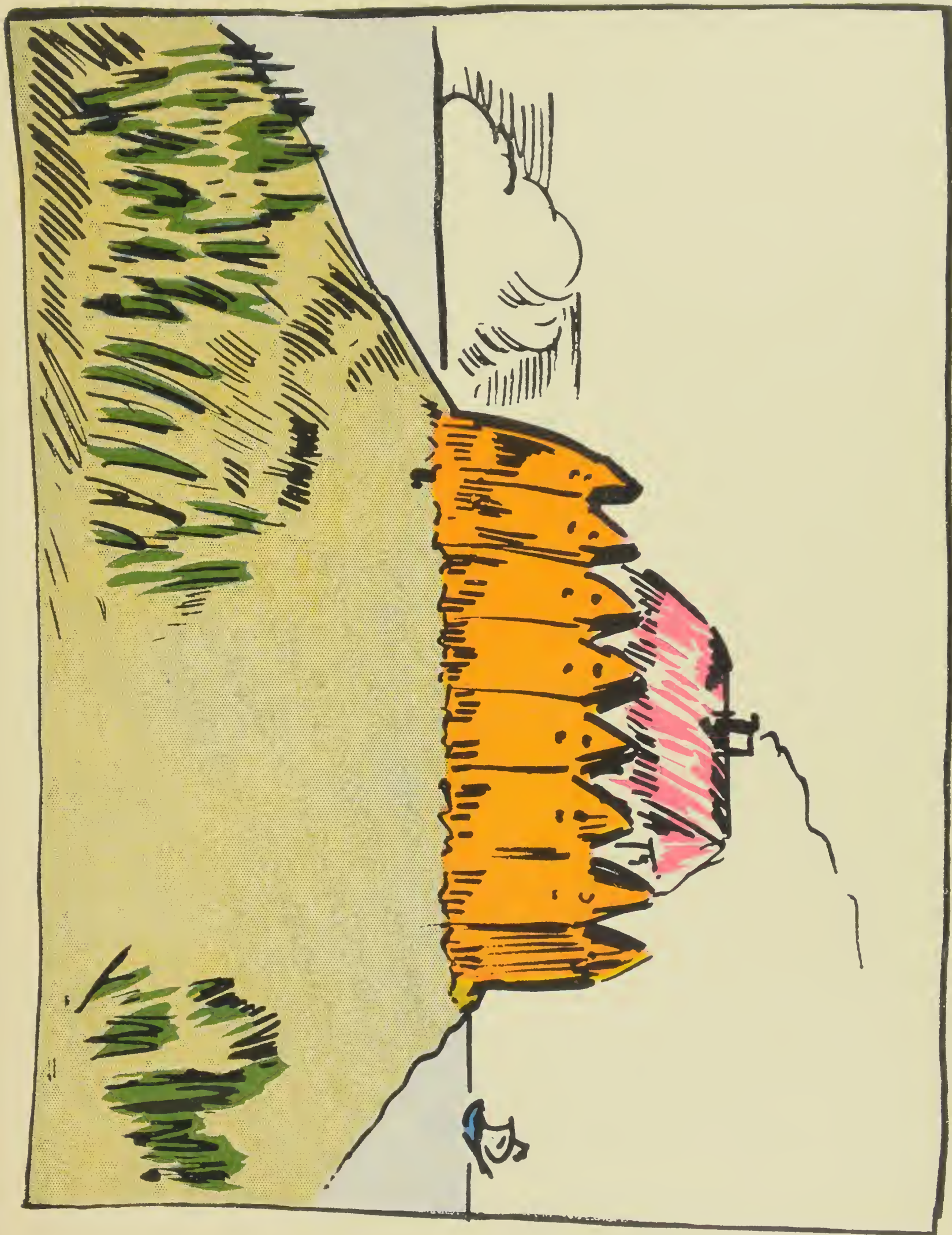


On the island of San Domingo Columbus built a small fort, the first white settlement in America since the days of Thorfinn and Leif

THE FORT was constructed out of the timbers of the "Santa Maria." The good ship had been driven on shore by a sudden squall and had been wrecked by the pounding of the waves. Forty-four men, half of the expedition, were left behind as a garrison, and the others were divided between the "Pinta" and the "Niña." On the 4th of January of the year 1493 the two ships sailed for home. On the 18th of February Columbus reached the Madeira Islands, and on the 4th of March he reached Lisbon. The King of Portugal, who would not listen to his plans ten years before, now received him with great distinction and bade him stay a while. But Columbus, who wished to make an official report of his adventures, sailed for Palos (where he arrived on the 15th of March) and at once drove to Barcelona, where the King and Queen of Spain happened to stay at that moment.

Few people have been accorded the honors with which Columbus was received. He marched at the head of a triumphant procession. His men carried strange arms and branches of trees, the like of which had never been seen. But the greatest interest centered in a number of Indians who had come to Europe with Columbus to be instructed in the Christian religion.

The expedition had been a complete success, and the son of the humble Genoese wool-carder was treated as a Grandee of Spain.



*When Columbus went upon his second voyage
everybody wanted to accompany him*

NO TIME was lost in sending out a second expedition. On the 24th of September of the year 1493 three big galleons and fifteen caravels with more than 1500 men sailed for the Indies and everybody hoped that he might be as rich as Croesus when he returned from El-Dorado.

Early in November the ships arrived in American waters. They discovered several new islands, among which was Porto Rico, but when they reached the little settlement of La Navidad they found that the fort had been destroyed by the Indians and that all the men had been murdered. This was not the first disappointment. It was soon common knowledge among the adventurers on the fleet that the Indian Islands were not made of solid gold, as they had expected. On the contrary, even in this happy part of the world, people were obliged to work for their living. Soon there was open warfare between the Spaniards and the Indians. Of course the Spaniards were victorious, but the scheme of sending the Indians wholesale to Spain to be sold as slaves did not make the explorers more popular with the natives of their new colonies.



*In the year 1498, on his third trip, Columbus
at last reached the American
continent*

THIS TIME when Columbus returned home, tired out from his terrible exposures and the many weeks when he had not been able to sleep, guiding his vessel through uncharted seas, his reception was less cordial. Two years later, however, he was ready for fresh adventures. With six ships he sailed for the Cape Verde Islands and then crossed the ocean. After three weeks he saw land. It was the thirty-first of July of the year 1498. Columbus thought that he had discovered some more islands. As a matter of fact, he had at last found the continent of South America. On the first of August, 1498, Columbus landed in Venezuela.

From there he made for the colonies in the West Indies, where things had gone very badly since he had left. Columbus was a great navigator and explorer but he was not a very good governor of an unruly colony. He had to deal with a very difficult problem. The men who had crossed the Ocean with him were not settlers like our own modern immigrants. They were adventurers pure and simple. They loved Columbus when they thought that he could make them all rich. When they failed to find gold and silver and diamonds in the streets of the small Spanish settlements they blamed their disappointment on the poor Admiral. "Why had he ever discovered these miserable islands anyway?"



COVINCIA

Meanwhile many people had gone to America to try their luck. When they did not find gold in the streets, they blamed the Admiral, who was accused of many crimes and put in irons

EVERY DAY the King and Queen of Spain were surrounded by disgruntled adventurers who accused the Admiral of the Ocean of every conceivable crime. At first their Majesties did not listen, but when their new colonies failed to produce the wealth which they had expected, they too began to think that the fault lay with Columbus. Therefore an official was sent to America to tell the Admiral to return to Spain and give an account of himself. The name of this official was Bobadilla and he was an officious fool. He not only obeyed the royal command, but upon his own authority he put the Admiral and his two brothers in irons. Then they were shipped back to Spain. The Captain of the ship, an honest fellow by the name of Vallejo, wanted to remove the irons, but Columbus would not allow this. The same man who had been hailed as the great discoverer of a New World returned to Spain in chains. It is true that Queen Isabella could not suffer to see the disgrace of a man who had always been her most devoted servant. Columbus was restored to his old dignities. He even made another voyage in 1502. But his spirit was broken, his body was weary with the ills of this world, and on the 29th of May of the year 1506 he died in Valladolid. His chains remained with him until the end. They were kept in a small cupboard and were buried with him. Even in the grave he found no rest. Five times his bones were removed. In the year 1898, after the Spanish war, they were for the last time taken from Havana to Seville.



*In the year 1497 two Italian travelers by the
name of Cabotto discovered the coast
of Newfoundland*

THE NEWS of the Spanish discoveries had rapidly spread all over Europe. It reached England and it greatly interested an Italian who was living in Bristol. His name was Giovanni Cabotto, and although born in Genoa he was a naturalized Venetian who had settled down in England. This John Cabot had seen a great deal of the world. He had been in Arabia and he knew what profit the Indies could bring to the man who should find the shortest road from Europe to Asia. He managed to interest King Henry VII in his ideas, and in the year 1496 sailed away in the good ship the "Matthew." His son Sabastiano accompanied him. The ship traveled due west for more than seven weeks. At last land was sighted. It was an island, now called Cape Breton Island, and there were no evidences of gold. Further voyages during the next years brought the Cabots to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia and that part of the North American coast which the Norsemen had explored in the eleventh century. The road to the Indies, however, was not disclosed by these brave navigators. And Sebastian Cabot devoted the rest of his days to the development of the Trading Company which had obtained a monopoly for the commerce with Russia. It proved to be more remunerative to deal with the Muscovite barbarians than with the wild men of the bleak new continent.



In the town of Nuremberg there lived many famous map-makers and geographers

WHILE MANY brave men were risking their lives trying to find the route to the Indies, others were performing as valuable, although less dangerous, tasks for the advancement of our geographical knowledge. The center of this interest in cartography or map-making and the perfection of astronomical instruments was the old Bavarian town of Nuremberg.

If ever you have a chance to go to Europe you must visit Nuremberg. Even today it looks very much as it did in the middle ages. The houses have high gabled roofs and everything has been painted in the brightest and most cheerful colors. On a hill above the city stands an old castle where the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire used to live. When they were away they left the care of this castle to a noble family by the name of Hohenzollern. This same house of Hohenzollern now rules the German Empire. In the churches there are many fine statues and paintings, for this is the town where Peter Vischer and Albrecht Duerer and Adam Krafft used to live. Engraving and woodcarving and all the delicate arts and crafts of the middle ages were practised here. People used to make clocks and mechanical toys and everything which takes patience and a high understanding of the mechanical process. There was much learning, and Nuremberg became a famous market-place where people from all over the world gathered to buy books and instruments and ever so many other things.

Today it is the town where all the little soldiers are made out of lead and wood.



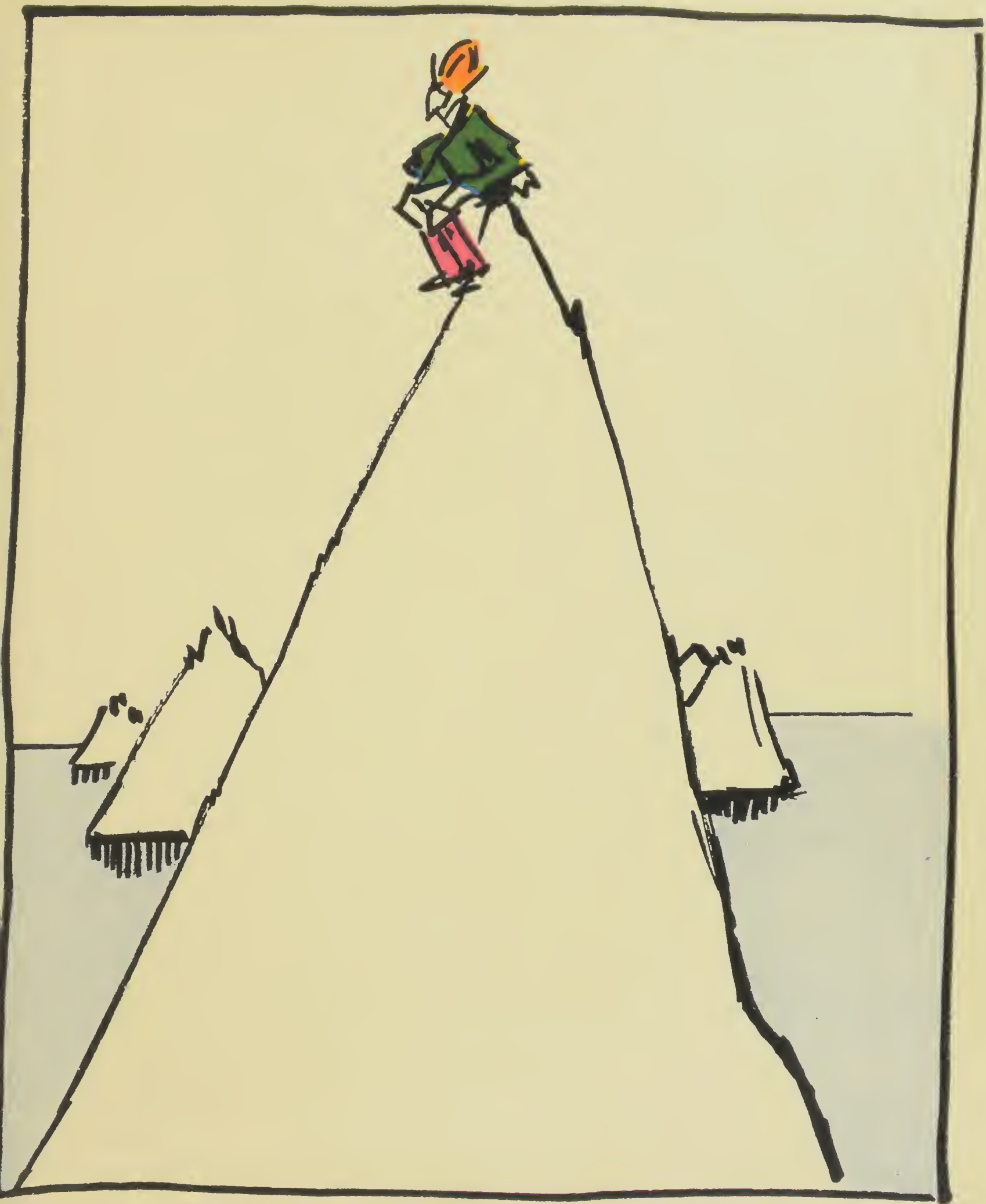
A learned geographer by the name of Hylacomylus suggested that the new countries should be called America, after the explorer Amerigo Vespucci

IN THIS town of Nuremberg there lived a very famous cosmographer by the name of Martin Behaim. He had made several trips to the African coast with Portuguese navigators and then settled down in his native city to draw and publish maps. One of his colleagues and friends was another German by the name of Martin Waldseemueller, who latinized his name and called himself Hylacomylus or Ilacomilus. (It was not very good Latin anyway, but Latinized-Germanized-Greek, after the fashion of the day.) Waldseemueller, in the year 1507, published a large map of the world in twelve sheets and also a globe of 110 millimeters diameter. When he came to the newly discovered parts of the world he wondered what he should call these many islands which seemed to be part of another continent. He might have called them after Columbus, but Columbus, while he could sail the ocean as well as anybody, never was much of an author. The work of popularizing the available information about the Novus Mundus had been done by a Florentine, named Amerigo Vespucci. Vespucci had been a merchant but he had given up his profession to take part in the Columbian explorations. About his own travels he had written a number of entertaining books and Waldseemueller decided to honor the popular author by naming the new lands after Vespucci. He took the name Amerigo, latinized it a bit to make it look more learned and dignified, and to this very day we call the new continent America,



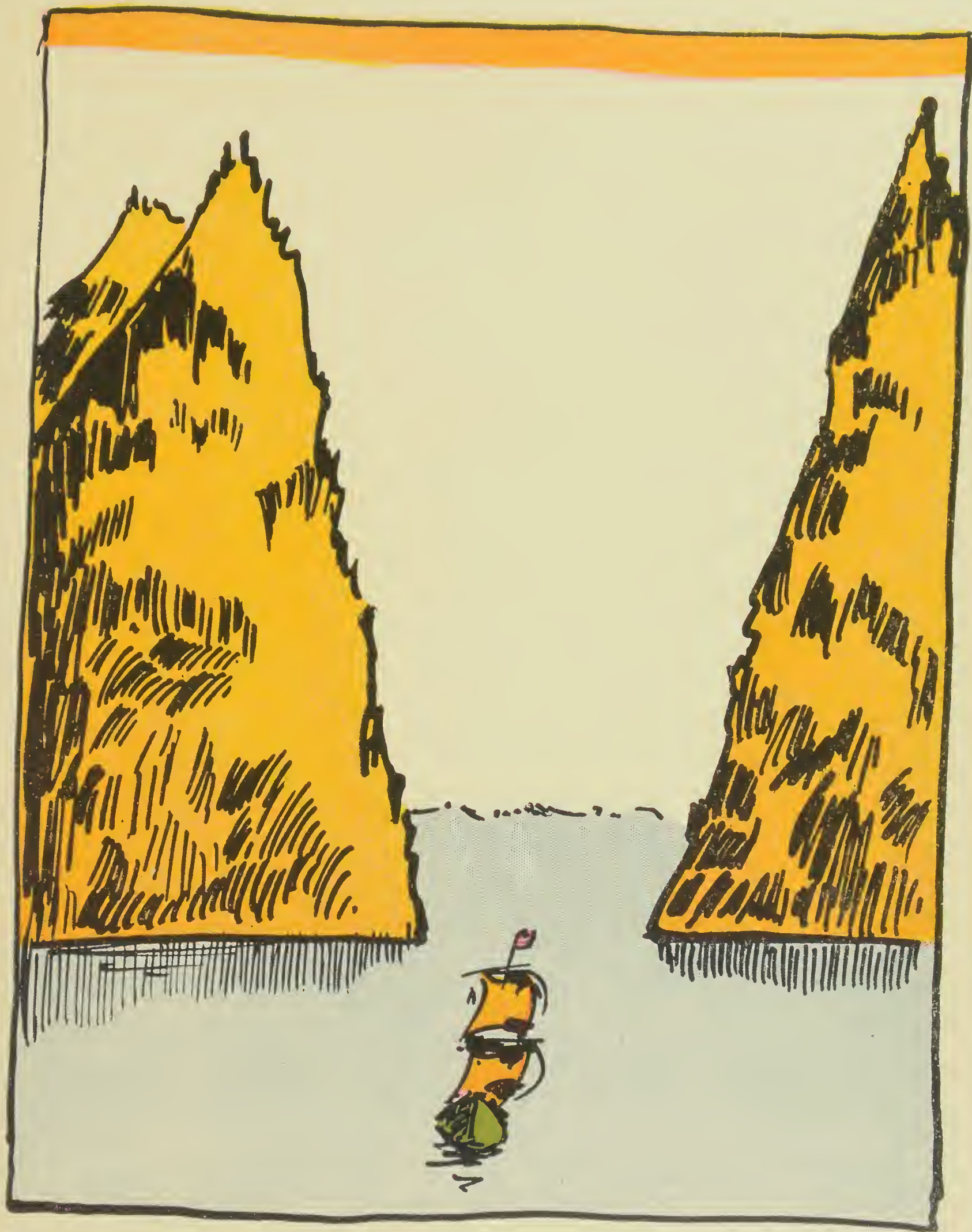
*In the year 1513 Balboa, sitting "silent upon a
peak in Darien," discovered the
Pacific Ocean*

YOU HAVE all heard the story of the egg of Columbus. When the great Genoese had once proved the simplicity of crossing the ocean everybody flattered him by an imitation of this remarkable feat. The Portuguese were among the first who tried to profit from the new discoveries. This led to many clashes between the Spaniards and the Portuguese, until finally the Pope took a ruler, divided the map of the world into two equal halves, gave one side to Portugal and the other to Spain. The Portuguese had the best of this bargain, for they now obtained the exclusive right to the Indies, which they had reached by way of the Cape of Good Hope. The Spaniards had to content themselves with the New World. They now tackled the coast of this immense island from all sides in the hope of finding some strait which would bring them through all this mass of land and island and would conduct them to Zipangu or Cathay. The Isthmus of Panama had been discovered at a very early time. Nobody, however, had taken the trouble to find out whether the land was broad or narrow. At last, however, in the year 1513, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa undertook an expedition across the high mountains of the Isthmus of Darien, as it was then called. From one of the loftiest peaks he suddenly saw a broad expanse of water. He had discovered the Pacific Ocean and had added greatly to our knowledge of geography. Poor Balboa did not reap the benefits of his labors. He was appointed royal governor of the lands along the Pacific coast, but in the year 1517 he was accused of treason. He was not guilty of this charge, but before he had a chance to defend himself he was condemned to death and decapitated.



*In the year 1520 a Portuguese, called Magellan,
sailed through the Straits of Magellan
into the Pacific*

THERE IS one thing which I do not like about our own time. Everything has already been discovered. Except for a few minor planets and fixed stars there is nothing new to find nowadays. Think of the fascination of living in the beginning of the fifteenth century! Here and there on the map were a few scribbles which indicated what the mariners had already discovered. But between these there were vast spaces upon which "Terra Incognita" was written in big black letters. And you were allowed to guess wild animals and savages and pink monsters into this "Unknown Territory." Furthermore, if you were familiar with geography and studied the investigations of other men you might draw certain conclusions of your own about new lands and straits and rivers which ought to exist, and if you could interest somebody who had ships and money you might even sail upon fresh adventures at the head of your own fleet. Such a man was Fernao Magalhaes or Ferdinand Magellan, as we call him. He was a Portuguese navigator who had spent many years in the Indies. In the year 1519 he set out at the head of five ships to discover a southwestern route to the Indies. He sailed along the coast of Brazil and the Argentine until he found a narrow strait between high mountains which, after many weeks of vain endeavor, brought him into the ocean on the west coast of America. For a long time his ships were becalmed in this newly discovered sea and he called it the Peaceful Ocean, or Pacific. At last he was blown westward and landed as the first white man in the Philippine Islands. Here he was killed in a battle in the year 1521. One of his ships, however, reached Spain. It was the first vessel to circumnavigate the globe.



At last, in the year 1616, two Dutch navigators, Schouten and le Maire, sailed around Cape Horn and thus reached the most southern point of the American continent

MAGELLAN HAD seen land to the south, but he had not investigated what there might be between himself and the South Pole. In the year 1526 Hoces ascertained that this land was another island. He called it Terra del Fuego, or Fire-land, because when he came near the shore he saw a fire made by some of the natives. For the moment that discovery was the last to be made along the south coast of America. Soon afterward the Indian monopoly went out of the hands of the Portuguese and the Spaniards and the Dutch became master of the Indian spice islands. They founded a Dutch East India Company and gave this society a monopoly of all the trade which came to them by way of the Cape of Good Hope. A Dutch capitalist thereupon decided to find a new route to the Indies through a new and as yet undiscovered strait. Then he hoped to share in the profits of the East India Company without interfering with the letter of the law. He equipped two ships and told their captains, Schouten and le Maire, to visit the southern point of America and look for a new route. In the year 1616 these two men sailed around Terra del Fuego, past a Cape which they called Cape Hoorn, after the little city of Hoorn on the Zuyder Zee, and then reached the Indies by way of the Pacific.

It is curious to note that they almost discovered Australia. But this mysterious continent remained hidden to the eye of man for 26 more years, when Abel Tasman discovered this great South Land for the benefit of the Dutch East India Company.



*In the year 1517 Cordova discovered Yucatan,
where the Mayas lived*

ON THE whole, the New World was a disappointment. The natives were not very well mannered and their customs were very unpleasant to the white man. There was not as much gold as had been suspected. And the immigrant had to work for his living. Unfortunately, the Spaniard who went to America looked so hard for either gain or a chance to baptize Indians that he missed some very interesting experiences. Take the question of the mysterious Maya Indians. In the year 1517 Cordova discovered Yucatan. Here he found a very elaborate and complete civilization. The Indians had built large temples which remind one of edifices in Egypt or Asia. They were very great astronomers and knew much more about stars and the sun and the moon than the average modern man does. They used a very intricate system of arithmetic and they kept a record of events which might have told us all about their ancient history. Unfortunately, the Spaniard did not have any use for this heathen wisdom and burned almost every book which had been written by the Maya priests. We have only a few of these manuscripts left, and our most acute brains have employed many years at the task of solving their riddles without making very much progress. As for the Mayas themselves, their descendants still live in Yucatan, which is now a Mexican province. They have forgotten all about their famous ancestors and do not even remember their language or their religion. It will interest you to go to a library and ask for some books which contain reproductions of the Maya calendars. The pictures are quite fascinating and perhaps you may solve the problem yourself.



In the year 1521 Cortez conquered Mexico City

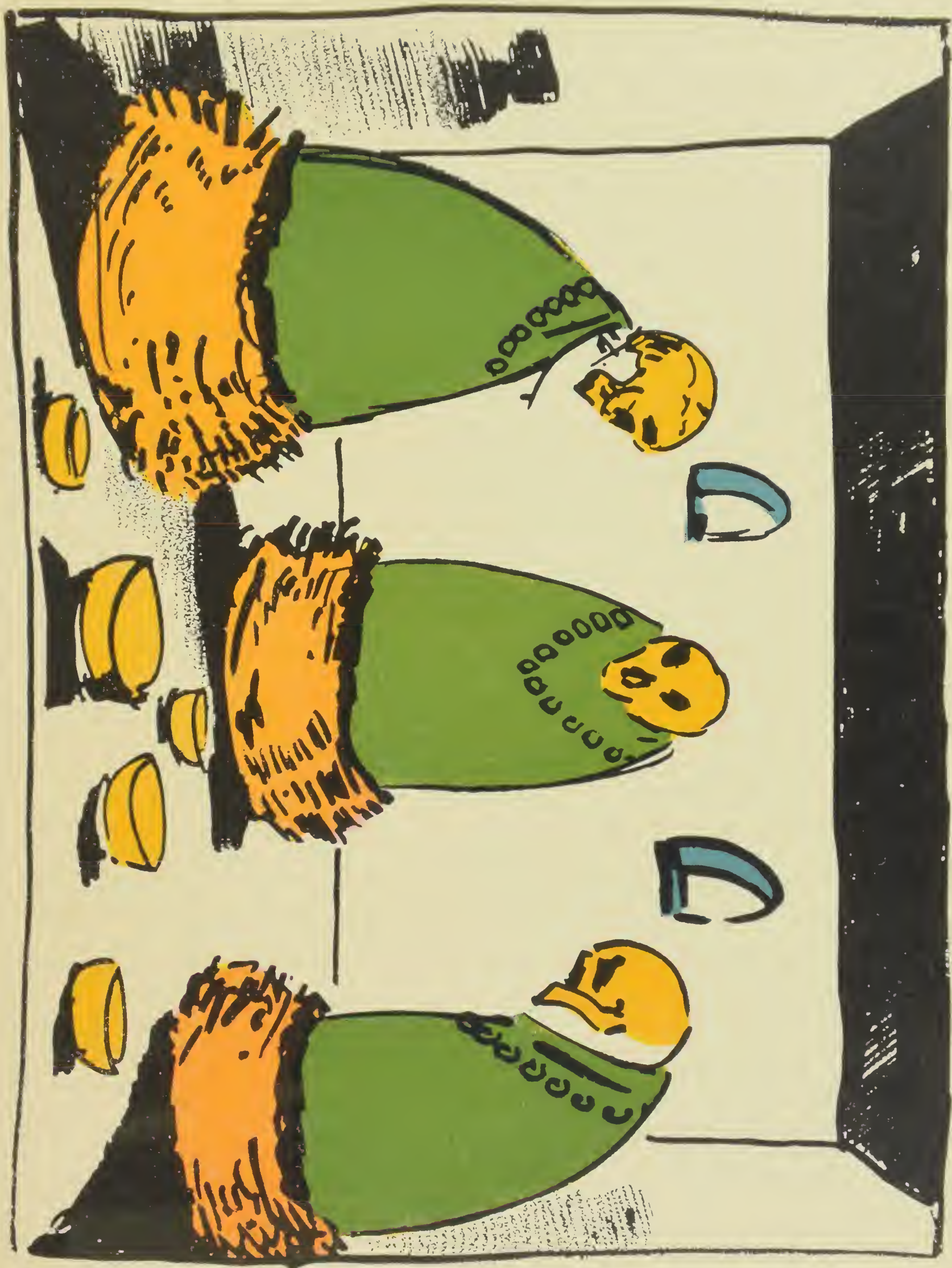
ONE OF the earliest governors of the Spanish colonies in America was a man by the name of Ovando. In the year 1504 he received a visit from a young cousin by the name of Hernando Cortes. This young man took service under the crown and joined the expedition which conquered Cuba in the year 1511. A few years later New Spain was discovered. We now call it Mexico. In the year 1518 an expedition of seven vessels under command of Cortes was sent to New Spain to conquer the land. Mr. Prescott, in his "History of the Conquest of Mexico," has told us all about this memorable event. At first the Mexican Indians received Cortes well and even admitted him to Tenochtitlan, their capital. But when he treated them harshly they rose in revolt. Cortes was driven out of the city. More than once he almost perished and many of his men were killed. He in turn captured the Aztec King, Montezuma, and had him murdered. In the year 1520, after a siege of three months, Cortes took Tenochtitlan. He destroyed the Indian town and then built a new Spanish city which was called Mexico City. For many years he was Governor of the lands in New Spain, and in the year 1536 he discovered Lower California.

As for the Aztecs, they still live in Mexico. They are the poor farmers and the laborers of the land. Their own ancient civilization was very cruel and they used to slaughter prisoners of war on a stone altar on a high hill. The new civilization which the white man brought them was a little more polished but did not make them much happier.



*Meanwhile Pizarro had captured Peru and
was stealing gold from the graves
of the Incas*

A SIMILAR STORY of conquest and destruction can be told about Peru. Here a famous soldier, distinguished in many European campaigns, won glory for himself but gained the execration of the natives. He was Francisco Pizarro, who had accompanied Balboa when he crossed the Isthmus of Panama. In the year 1524 Pizarro sailed from Panama for unknown southern shores. This expedition was not a success, and Pizarro went back to Spain. But in the year 1531 he went upon a second voyage. He landed on the Peruvian coast and found that the Indians were engaged in a civil war between two brothers, Atahualpa and Huascar. He made the best possible use of this fraternal strife, conquered the whole of Peru, and began to rule the new colony as Governor General. But he made himself so unpopular with his own people that he was murdered by a number of Spaniards in the year 1541. As for the civilization which Pizarro found in the country, he destroyed it almost completely. The Incas of Peru, the rulers of a mighty empire which had lasted more than five centuries when Pizarro came, had encouraged a civilization which was very remarkable. The Peruvians knew how to build cities, and with very crude utensils they constructed walls and houses which have survived every attack of man and climate. They were far advanced in many arts, and like the ancient Egyptians they knew how to make mummies of their dead people. These they buried with great care and surrounded them with articles made of pure gold. The early conquerors showed little respect for such graves. They destroyed the mummies and stole the gold.



In the year 1539 de Soto tried to find another gold land. In the year 1542 he died of exposure and was buried in the Mississippi, which he had just discovered

MEXICO and Peru had been very profitable investments for the Spanish crown. Hence a number of people hoped to find another gold land which might enrich them and bring fame to their name. One of these men was Fernando de Soto. He had accompanied Pizarro to Peru and he had grown so rich that even the Emperor Charles V, who then ruled Spain, was astonished at the vast sum of money which de Soto brought back from the New World. When de Soto asked for permission to discover another El Dorado, the Emperor encouraged the plan. At his own expense de Soto equipped an expedition, and in the year 1539 he sailed for Florida. This voyage was a terrible failure. De Soto wandered through the southern part of the North American continent for several years. He found deserts and cacti and a big river which the Indians called the Mississippi. But he did not find any gold. His companions died from disease and exhaustion or were killed by the Indians. Finally de Soto himself fell a victim to his lust for wealth. He died in the year 1542 of a fever and was buried in the Mississippi, so that the Indians might not mutilate his body. There he has rested ever since. Only a few of his comrades eventually reached Mexico City. It was one of the most disastrous voyages ever undertaken.



*At the same time de Coronado was exploring
northern Mexico, where in the year
1542 he found the Pueblo Indians*

HALF A CENTURY had now gone by since Columbus first crossed the Atlantic. Many mighty rivers and vast stretches of territory had been found and had been charted. But the easy and short route to Cathay remained hidden. It did not exist, and we have been obliged to dig it ourselves across the Isthmus of Panama, where Balboa first crossed from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

As for the voyages on land they hardly belong to a book of this scope. In the year 1542 de Coronado found the Pueblo Indians. And many French explorers wandering westward discovered new inland seas and great waterfalls and vast plains. But the exciting days of sailing in small ships to unknown lands were almost over.



*In the year 1609 Hendrik Hudson discovered
the Hudson River. The name of his
ship was the "Half Moon"*

ONE IMPORTANT river of the northern continent was still unknown to the European visitors. That was the Hudson River. It takes its name from Hendrik Hudson, an Englishman, who had made many voyages to the White Sea for the English Muscovite Company and who during the first years of the seventeenth century entered the service of some Dutch merchants. In the year 1607 he commenced his search for the Northwestern Passage. He did not find it, but instead he discovered a broad river which his little ship, the "Half Moon," explored for many weeks. This happened in the year 1609. He went home and reported his adventures. Then in the year 1610 he resumed the search for the Northwest Passage. He discovered the Hudson Bay (which became the center of the west European fur trade after the English had incorporated the Hudson Bay Company in the year 1670) and he wished to push further west, when his disgruntled sailors mutinied.



In the year 1611 Hendrik Hudson, trying to discover the Northwestern Passage, perished in Hudson Bay

AS HUDSON insisted upon continuing his voyage his men decided to get rid of him. Together with his small son and seven other men they set their captain adrift in a small boat.

They all froze to death.

This occurrence has little to do with the history of discoveries. But I mention it on purpose. Hudson perished alone and far away from his fellow-men. He had the consolation of the stars and the ever-restless waves to cheer him up during his last moments. He knew that he had faithfully done his duty. Like the majority of his fellow explorers, he never reaped a material reward for the great services which he had rendered to all men.

For it has been decreed that those who are pioneers in any field of human enterprise are so greatly blessed beyond their fellow-men that they must suffer greater pains than those who lead an uneventful existence. And that seems right.



In the year 1584 Sir Walter Raleigh, who had popularized smoking, brought a colony of two hundred people to Virginia

A VERY SAD story, too, is that of Sir Walter Raleigh, who lived from 1552 until 1618. For although he brought great fame to his country and served his sovereign, the Queen Elizabeth, very faithfully, yet he was condemned to death by her successor on account of charges brought against him by the King of Spain and he was decapitated. He had been educated at Oxford, for he belonged to a period when a gentleman must know how to write as well as how to fight.

He made a trip to the West Indies, fought King Philip of Spain, and commanded English armies in many parts of the world. It is said that Sir Walter brought tobacco for the first time to Europe. The Indians used to smoke the leaves of the tobacco plant, and at a very early date the Spaniards had carried tobacco plants from Mexico to Spain. Sir John Hawkins had introduced smoking into England in the year 1565. People in England, however, had been a bit scared of “drinking” this strange new weed. It was not until Sir Walter Raleigh took to smoking and made it fashionable among the best families that pipes became general. Hence we usually hear it said that we owe our tobacco to Sir Walter, although this is not historically correct.

Smoking spread very slowly among the other nations of Europe. During many years people used tobacco as a medicine, but then they began to take it merely for the fun and they have done so ever since. Nowadays we try to prevent small boys from smoking. That is a very good idea. It is not good for them.

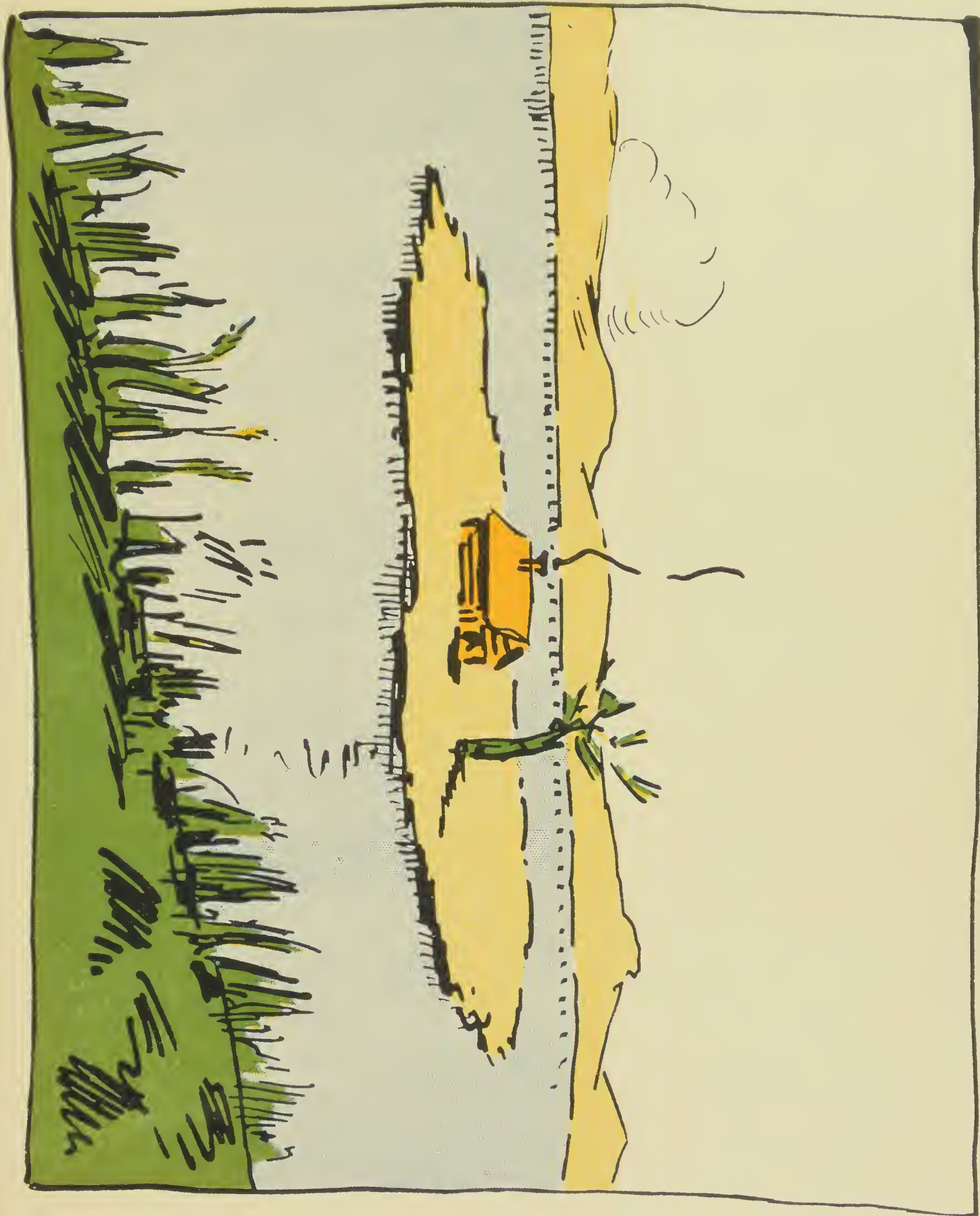


In the year 1607 Jamestown, the first permanent white settlement on the northern continent, was built

FEW PAGES in the history of the North American continent are as interesting as that of the first white settlements.

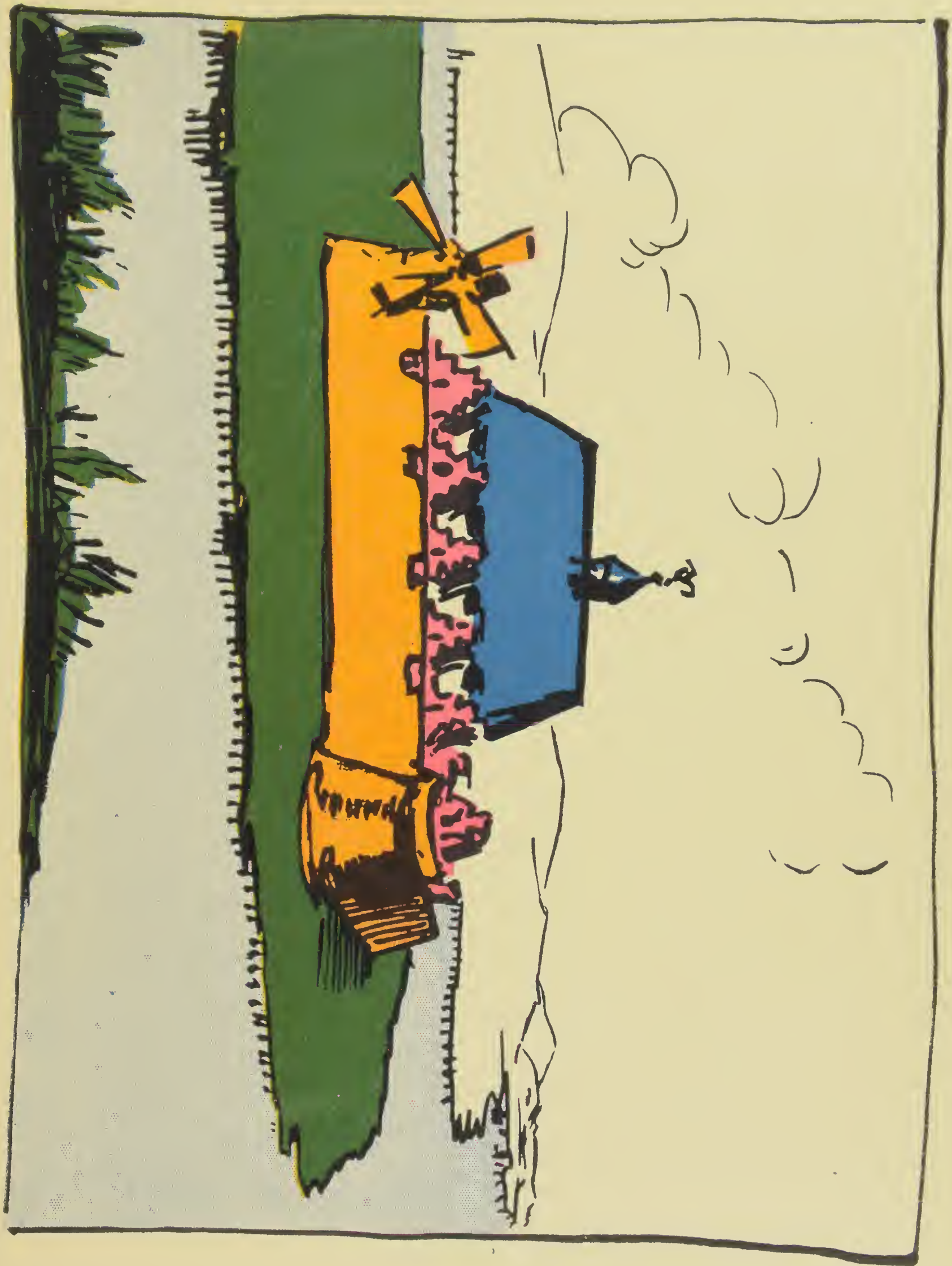
There was, for example, a village built by Sir Walter Raleigh which disappeared from the face of the earth without leaving a trace of man, woman, child or cat.

Then there was Jamestown, originally founded upon a small peninsula in the James River. Of this we have a few ruins. But I must not tell you too much about it. It does not belong to the story of the early discoveries. It is part of American history, and of that many people know ever so much more than I can ever hope to do.



The Dutch West India Company followed this example and built Nieuw Amsterdam

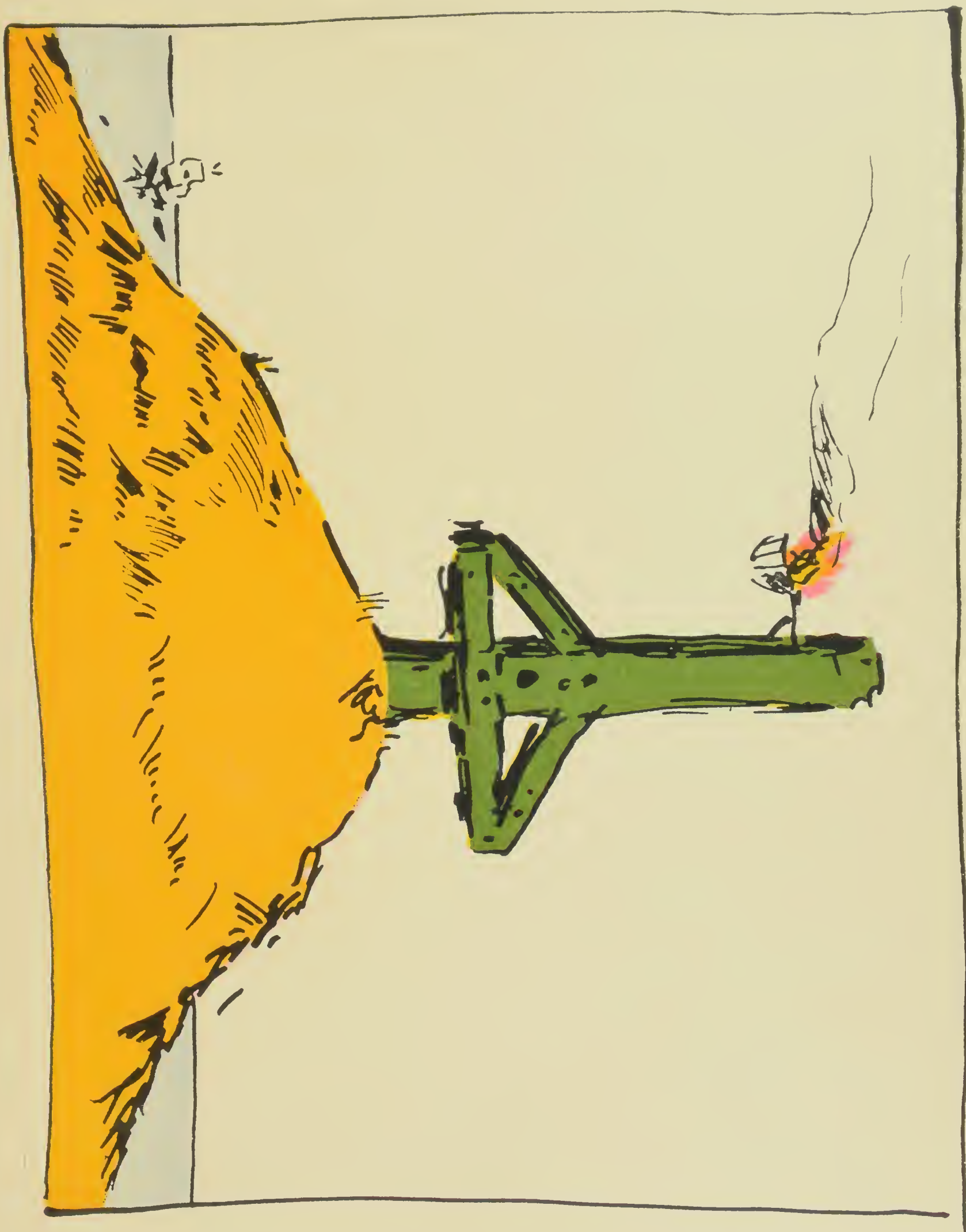
THIS PICTURE of Nieuw Amsterdam really does not belong in this book, but I put it in to tell you something about my own people. They were merchants and made their living carrying goods and grain and everything which Europe needed from all the parts of the globe. They fought for eighty years to get rid of the tyranny of Spain, and pursuing their Spanish enemy into the Indian Ocean, they conquered a vast Indian Empire. This was managed by the Dutch East India Company. When this Company proved to be very successful, some rich merchants founded a West India Company which meant to establish trading stations in America. At the mouth of the river which Hudson had discovered they built a small fort, together with a church and a windmill, and they called it Nieuw Amsterdam, after the most important city of the Dutch Republic. This little city soon developed as a center for the fur trade with the Indians. But the plan of settling Dutch farmers in the colony failed. There were only a million and a half people in Holland. Everybody was so busy at home and there was so little need of migrating to foreign shores that the farmers refused to leave their comfortable homes to go and live among wild Indians. When the English had suddenly captured it, the Dutch sent an Admiral by the name of Evertsen to reconquer it. A short while later, however, they exchanged their North American possessions for some rich sugar plantations in South America. It was a foolish thing to do, but how could the people in Holland in the year 1664 know that their little village was some day going to be the great city of New York?



*Then the Puritans came to Boston and built
a city around a High Beacon on top
of a hill*

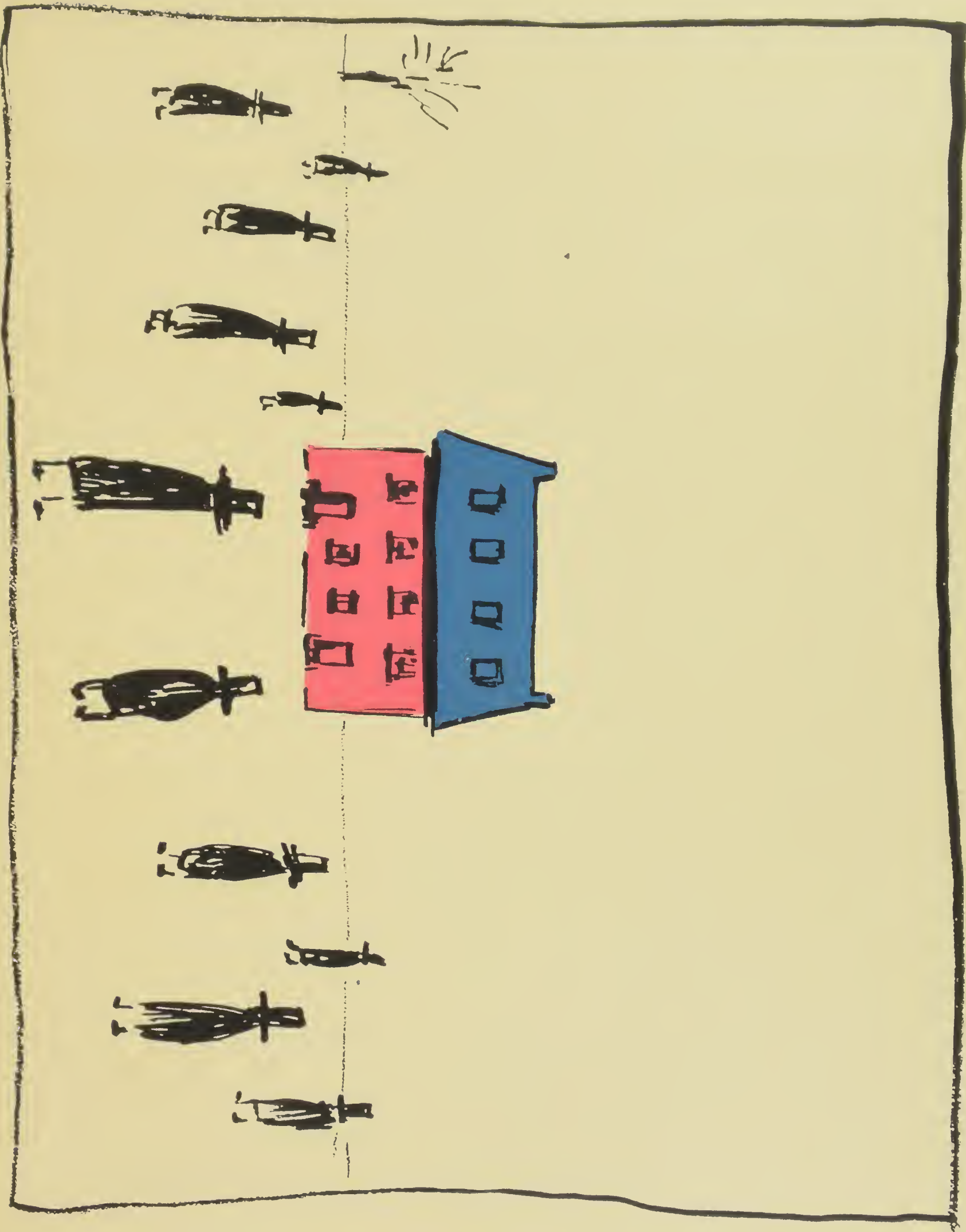
ONE OF THE reasons which made it unnecessary for the people of Holland to leave their own country was the freedom of worship which the Dutch government allowed all their own inhabitants and the many foreigners who flocked to their cities to escape persecution at home. It was different in England. The established church in England did not approve of Dissenters. Hence those who worshipped God in a different way from that prescribed by the authorities were made so uncomfortable that they often left their homes and went either to Holland or to America. Some of them, for example, the Pilgrims who founded a colony in Plymouth, did both and first visited Holland and then proceeded to America.

The best known of the English colonies which were founded in this way was Massachusetts (I hope that I have got all the s's and t's right), where the Puritans built a very prosperous city around a high beacon, which showed the ships coming from England where the harbor was. I could tell you a great many things about these Puritans, for I know them very well. But it is not fit that a foreigner should teach you things about the history of your own country and therefore I will not say another word.



*To instruct their young men in sound doctrines,
they founded Harvard University in
the year 1636*

AS FOR Harvard University, of which you see a lovely picture made originally when the Puritan young men used to frequent this place (ever so many years ago), I only made this picture of it because once upon a time I went to that university myself, and by attending lectures, with great patience and industry I gradually learned to draw pictures with a fair amount of success.

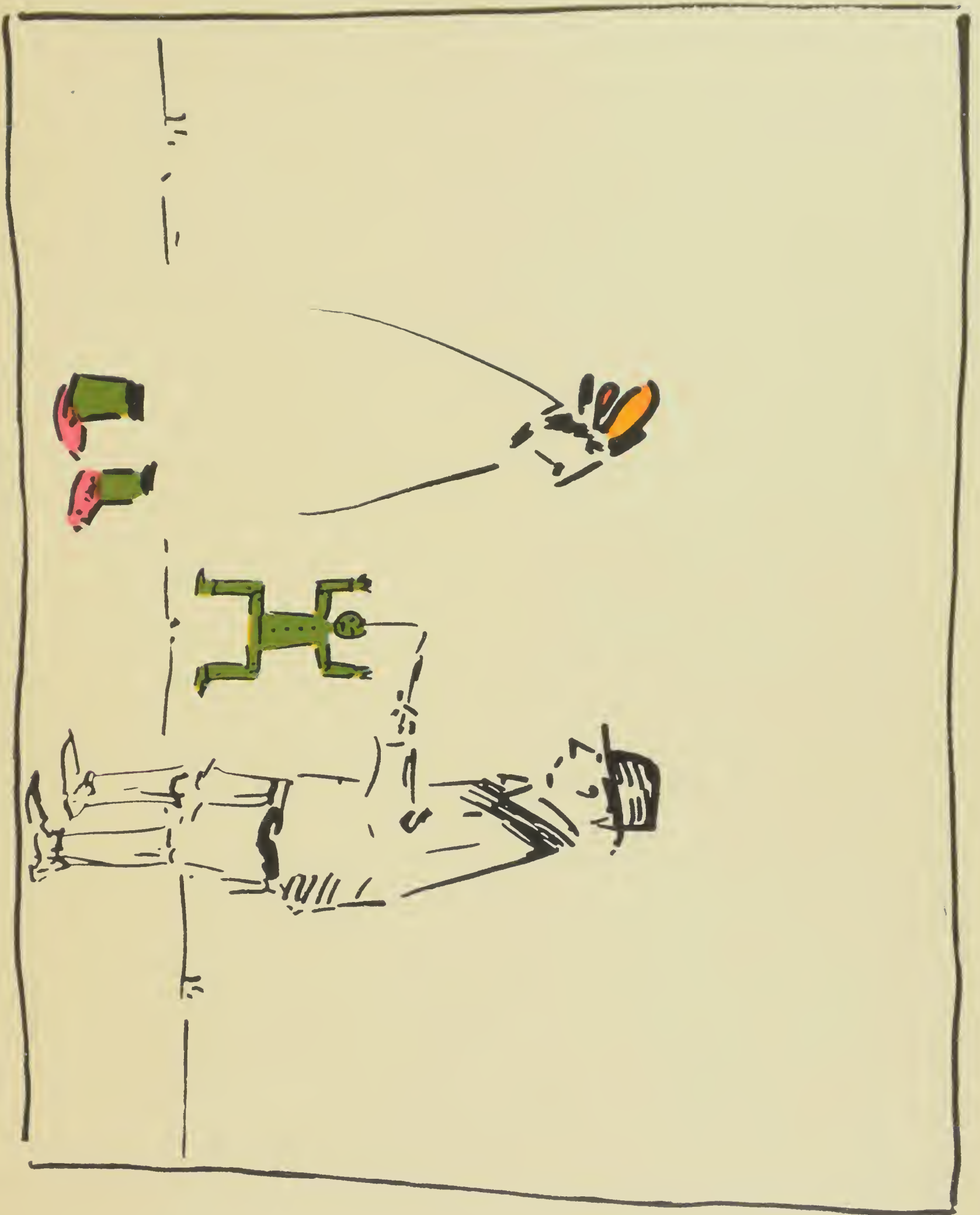


*Finally, in the year 1682, William Penn, an
English Quaker, received a grant of
Indian lands in Pennsylvania*

AND THAT brings us to the last picture. That, too, has little to do with the history of navigation or discovery. For good William Penn was not an explorer. He knew beforehand where he was going and a real explorer never does. He wished to establish a colony where his own fellow Quakers might have freedom of worship. He got a grant for a vast tract of land, sailed across the ocean, made friends with the Indians, and founded the city of Philadelphia.

Of course I shall not tell you about the great things which happened in Philadelphia. You ought to know all about the Declaration of Independence and the men who had the courage to sign it, or you are not worthy to be called a citizen of this great Republic.

I have my own reasons for being grateful to William Penn. He built the city where my publisher lives.



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